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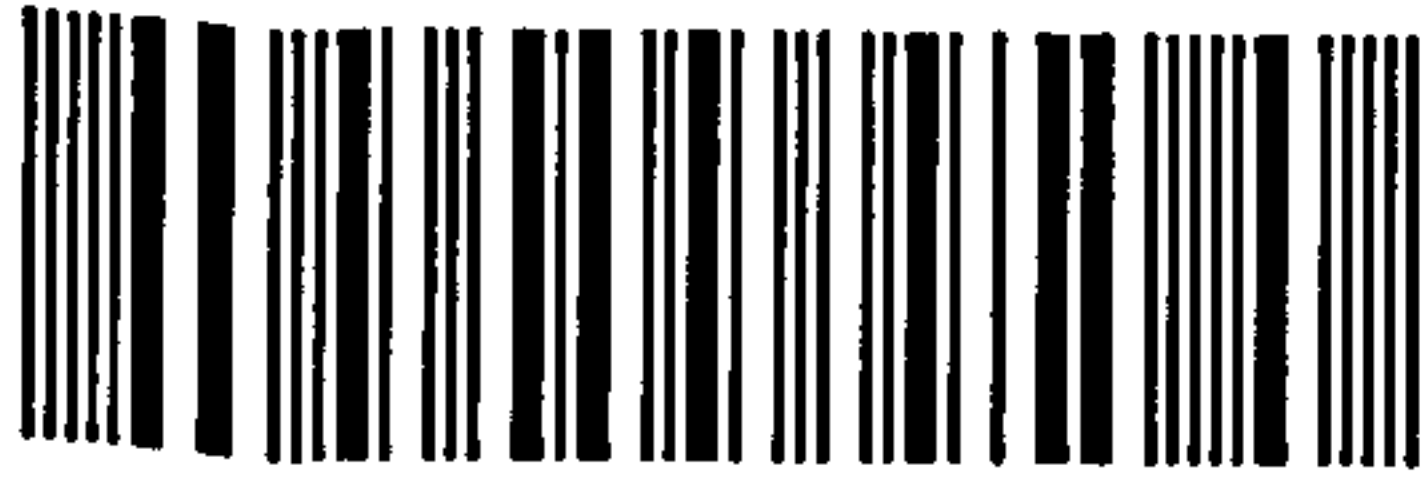
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IAN BARRON

**B.A. (HONS), M.A. IN EDUCATION
M7102040**

***An exploration of the factors
that affect the ethnic
identities of a group of three
and four year old children***

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the relationship between the individual and the social and cultural in the development of young children's ethnic identities in the context of a particular nursery school and its community in the North-West of England. A group of children, three-quarters of whom were of Pakistani-heritage and a quarter of whom were of British white-indigenous heritage, were studied, initially at home and then as they started nursery, using an ethnographic approach. The research points to a conception of ethnic identity as part of a multiple, shifting and fixing network of performances which involve borders of belonging and marginalisation and which include identities of gender, age; class, ethnicity, culture and religion. The research reveals the way in which white, indigenous, more affluent children, (particularly girls), were encouraged as legitimate participants but how less affluent, white children, (particularly boys), and children from the least affluent and most traditional families of Pakistani – heritage were marginalised as outsiders, usually because of barriers of language and previous experience. Ethnic identity is thus conceived of as emerging from practices and communities and is mediated and brokered by access to participation. In this sense, participation, in all its forms, may be understood as an ontological imperative because without it, ethnic identity, and other forms of identity, cannot emerge. None of this is straightforward: it is embedded in the multitude of power relations which shape the world. The research points to a need for more recognition that cultural practices in early childhood education are not necessarily shared and greater clarity is needed about the sociocultural resources that children from different backgrounds bring to the experience of early childhood education. This requires thoughtful and sensitive professional development and exploration of what early childhood provision should look like if fossilization and marginalisation are to be avoided.

Chapter One:

Framework and Focus of the Research

The concern of the present study is to explore the factors which affect young children's experiences of ethnic identity. The focus reflects interest, as a university lecturer, in issues of diversity and also previous experience, some ten years before, of working in a nursery with an intake of a minority of white-indigenous ethnic origin and a majority of Pakistani-heritage and questions about what the notion of ethnicity actually means in this particular context.

The aims of the research were:

- To explore the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity
- To explore how the children experience their own ethnicity and that of others through their activities and language
- To explore the part that a particular nursery, the adults there and other children play in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity
- To explore the part played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity
- To consider the wider implications of the research and its practical application in early childhood education.

The research seemed particularly worth pursuing because there is very little literature, in English, concerned with young children's ethnic identities and hence there was the opportunity to make a contribution that would add to knowledge and influence practice in the field. The research also seemed worth undertaking because even in the literature concerned with older children and with adults (which will be referred to later), there is considerable divergence in the way that ethnic identity is conceived and a particular concern is

with seeking to conceptualise more clearly what ethnicity might mean and involve. It is discussed in relation to similarity and difference, kinship, history, countries of origin, language, religion, power, politics, economics, skin colour, and social and cultural practices. Much of this literature, as, Oommen (2001), Malesevic (2004) and Verkuyten (2005), for example, note, tends to use the term ethnic identity interchangeably with racial identity and with cultural identity. Jenkins (1996), Bader (2001), Verkuyten (2005) and Nayak (2006) also point to the way in which the literature is marked either by a tendency to view ethnic identity in essentialist terms and see it as fixed before birth and into the future beyond the individual by a connection to a heritage and some form of home land (even if these are imagined, as in Kaufman's usage, 2006) or as indefinable because of a post-modern contention that such stability is illusory and that to define is to fix, to simplify and to make assumptions about identities when they need to be understood as complex, contradictory and in incongruous process. There is also a tendency to view ethnic identity in negative terms in relation to issues such as discrimination, in part reflecting the origins of the term 'ethnicity' as meaning people who were not Hellenic, and later, not Jewish and then not Christian (see O'Hagan, 1999, Malesevic, 2004).

The present study seeks to explore the complexities of children's ethnic identities, rather than being concerned solely with discrimination, and to view their every day activities as sites where something may be gleaned about what ethnic identities might mean and about how they are lived out and enacted by children as they interact with other children and with adults. Ethnic identity is understood as an aspect of how the children conceive of who they are. As Verkuyten (2005) notes, there has been very little research that has looked at how people give meaning to their ethnic identities in their everyday situations. The concern here is precisely with the experiences in the home and nursery setting as the locus of shared constructions and understandings. The study, therefore, seeks to

engage with the psychology of ethnicity and, in doing so, acknowledges that such psychology is constructed in the social.

Before engaging further with theoretical positions in relation to ethnic identity, the structure of the study will be outlined in brief. In the chapter that follows, consideration is given to the ways in which literature regarding development, identity, ethnicity, early childhood education and sociocultural views of learning and development contribute to beginning to conceptualise what might be meant by ethnic identity. There then follow two chapters that deal with methodological matters. The first of these chapters seeks to outline the ways in which the methodological decisions made and positions adopted reflect understandings both about the nature of the social world and how it can be investigated and about the nature of ethnic identity. The second of the chapters, then provides more specific information about the research context and the methods and procedures adopted. Consideration is given to how these reflect the methodological stance taken and what it was thought worth investigating in order to seek to understand and conceptualise young children's ethnic identities. Following the two methodological chapters, the findings are presented in parallel with an analytical discussion of them that seeks to explore what is significant in coming to conceptualise young children's ethnic identities. The thesis then concludes by returning to consider what has been learnt in relation to the study's aims and with a discussion regarding the professional implications of the research.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

Mapping the Terrain

Whilst there is very little existing literature concerned with young children's ethnic identities, the present study, following Frable (1997), conceives of ethnic identity as an aspect of identity more generally and so it is with such literature that the discussion will begin. As Verkuyten (2005) and Skattebol (2005) note, identity has been conceptualised either as individual and 'a state of being' (Skatebol, 2005, p.192) and has examined internal processes or as 'a set of social practices that position subjects in social space' (Skatebol, 2005, p.192) and has, consequently, explored external processes. Consideration will, therefore, be given first to the study of identity as internal process, a traditional psychological approach. Discussion will then turn to approaches that pay more attention to social, cultural and political aspects of identity, such as social constructivism, post-modernism and critical perspectives, bringing in a socio-cultural approach. There will then be an examination of the ways in which such approaches have influenced the small amount of literature that does exist in relation to young children's ethnic identity. This will be followed by a discussion of the factors that shape the form of early childhood education that is provided in the nursery because these are considered to underpin the way in which ethnic identity is experienced: in other words, the concern is with the factors that underpin experience and construct identity. Finally, the notion of ethnic identity as situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) is examined in order to provide a framework within which to explore experiences in the home and the nursery setting, as the loci of shared constructions, discourses, understandings, performances and practices in relation to ethnic identity.

Identity as Internal Process

Constructivist models of development, such as that of Piaget (1954, 1975) tend to see children's understanding of aspects of identity, such as ethnicity and gender, as largely cognitive processes, because, in traditional psychology, the cognitive is seen as distinct from social and emotional approaches. Identity is perceived as 'developing' *within* the child, even if this is considered to require active engagement with the environment. Understandings of social categories, such as those relating to ethnic identity, are considered to form relatively late by Piaget (1954) and followers such as Schaffer (1996) because they are seen as requiring understandings about self and other that are not possible until middle childhood. This is very much in line with stage theories of development, where first one thing has to happen in order to enable another.

Alongside constructivist theories of identity, account needs also to be taken of psychoanalytical approaches, which are major theoretical notions seeking to understand the emotional life, which is seen as having a bearing on the construction of identity. Freud's psychosexual theory (1991) is concerned with how the individual's identity is formed through the work of the unconscious in relation to a series of developmental crises and in a process of sexuality and gender identification, first with the parents and then with the wider world. Freud gives little consideration to other aspects of identity, however, such as ethnicity, and gender and sexuality are seen as fixed and stable and the drive is towards essentialist and normative notions of what being male and female means and towards a supposed ideal of heterosexuality. At one level, Freud acknowledges the role of the social in development but the concern with fixed internal drives makes the theory essentially intra-psychological. Erikson (1980) retains the notion of identity emerging from a series of life crises that are both individual and social in nature but makes the important further point that identity is multilayered and concerned

with the individual, the group and the point in time. Frable (1997, p.147) argues that the model is one where there is initially no awareness of race and ethnicity but where 'the individual is challenged by experiences that make race or ethnicity personally problematic' and where individuals come to see their ethnic group identity as important to them and may see it as 'the most important identity or one of several salient identities'. These notions of being challenged by experiences and of the significance of other identities are important for the present study but whilst Freud and Erikson's conceptions are useful starting points, they are not sufficient in themselves, at least in part because they suggest a model of the world that sees life primarily as a journey towards unquestioned notions of stability and rationality.

Understandings about identity are required that are not merely concerned with unfolding from within because, as Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006, p.27) argue, 'subjectivity originates not inherently from inside the person, but from the social realm; consequently, it is not fixed, but rather is fluid and dynamic'. More consideration is needed, following Vygotsky (1978), of how the environment and relationships shape experience and development and of the ways in which, even though children may not be able to articulate notions of ethnicity, this does not mean that it is not part of who they are. This also begins to point towards critical realist approaches (Bhaskar, 1998c) which see the empirical (that which we experience) as only one part of what makes us who we are: the empirical reflects causal tendencies which point to the world of the real (of which more later). Since the concern of the present study is with exploring how children experience ethnic identity in the course of engagement in the practices of home and nursery, a theoretical framework is required, as argued by Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003), that emphasises children's varied and overlapping participation in ethnic identities in particular dynamic contexts rather than their membership of essentialised ethnic groups.

Beyond the Individual

Quintana et al (2006, p.1135) argue that 'Future researchers would be well served to reflect the multidimensional and fluid nature of ethnic and racial identities, and to continue to explore the role of situations and context'. This brings us to models of development that consider the social and cultural nature of human life. Vygotsky's model of development (1978) is seen as providing the basis for an understanding of ethnic identities as constructed in particular political, religious, societal, cultural and temporal contexts, which, as Gutierrez et al (1999, p.287) argue, may be 'disharmonious and hybrid spaces of rupture, innovation and change that lead to learning'. The model is seen as being helpful in that it begins to point to the ways in which development may be conceived of as learning that occurs inter-psychologically, in a particular social, cultural and historical context, making use of 'cultural tools' (in this case, particularly, play materials, language and other forms of symbolic representation), later being internalised as intra-psychological process. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) is also considered useful in helping to understand in more detail the ways in which development occurs through the interplay and connections between people and events at the micro level (the immediate social and physical environment, focused on intimate personal relationships and the key experiences in which the individual engages), the meso level (the relationships and connections between the different micro-systems in which individuals are situated) and macro levels (the cultural, political, religious, moral and economic imperatives that govern life at the level of any given society). In terms of the present study, this means attention is paid to the ways in which ethnic identity is negotiated in the micro and meso-level contexts of the home, nursery and local community and comes to interact with macro-level societal influences.

The insights of Foucault (1998, 2002) are also helpful in beginning to articulate how identity is constructed through the historically, politically, culturally and socially determined discourses that operate in society and which determine how the world is understood. These discourses function through all forms of symbolic representation, particularly language, and it is through these discourses that individuals take up positions in the world and are positioned or do not take up positions and are excluded. As Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006, p.32) note, for Foucault 'our sense of self and how we relate to the world, as well as the ways that we become individual subjects, who are gendered, classed, racialized, ethnicized, sexualized and so on, are constituted within the discourses that we locate ourselves in and take up as our own ways of being in the world.'

Hall (1996) points out that critics of Foucault argue that he fails to explain the means by which individuals do or do not identify with their subject positions under the influence of discourses of power, in other words that there is no account of agency. Walsh and Bahnisch (2002, p.35) maintain that the notion that discourses are enacted and constructed through the individual means that there are opportunities to resist and to reshape them. Foucault (2002, p.120) however, argues that 'what makes power hold good ... is ... that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no it induces pleasure ...'. In other words, it leads to impressions and experiences of agency. An important aspect of the present study will be to examine how far and in what manner this is true in respect of children's performances in relation to ethnicity: there will be discussion later of whether there really is power to resist within the children's experiences at home and nursery or of whether the power to resist is only another expression of the exercise of power as Foucault (2002) would suggest.

Internal Responses to the External

Holland et al (1998) suggest that the response of many post-structuralists to the problem of agency has been to take up post-modern psychoanalytic theory. Lacan (1989) sees the child's sense of self and identity as essentially splintered in the first year and maintains that this process is to be understood in terms of what he terms the 'mirror stage' where a relationship is established between the 'organism and its reality' (1989, p.4). Awareness of self in the mirror is played out against the sense of self as asserted and projected but also in relation to other people as they reflect back elements of who the child is and is becoming. This awareness, for Lacan, is, however, based on the illusions and fantasies of the mirror and can never bring satisfaction despite apparent pleasure and brings about a lack that results in a desire of the Other that can never be fulfilled.

Ahmed (2000) makes use of Lacan (1989) to explain this awareness of the self as reflected in the mirror and by people as the mechanism by which a sense of ethnic identity emerges in relation to skin colour. She argues that the disturbance of the mirror stage involves an awareness of Other which has skin colour at its heart: 'the encounter through which the subject assumes a body image and comes to be distinguishable from the Other is a racial encounter' (Ahmed, 2000, p.43). One's sense of self is therefore, in this account, based on one's skin colour and this forms the first sense of border or boundary. Thus one's sense of inclusion or exclusion depends on how far we identify with or do not identify with the skin colour of those around us.

Zizek (1989) also draws upon Lacan (1989) in seeking to explore ethnic identity and takes up the notion of *jouissance*, arguing that our sense of pleasure and enjoyment is always located in the Other. Since *jouissance* exists only outside oneself in the Other, happiness, enjoyment and contentment can never be attained and so the

unconscious develops fantasies of antagonism in relation to the perceived advantages of the Other, which Žižek sees as the basis of ethnic identity and enmity. In a similar vein, Bhabha (1994, p.64) claims, drawing upon Derrida (2002), that what is significant to the development of identity is not the Other but 'the disturbing distance in-between' self and Other, 'where the shadow of the Other falls upon the self' (Bhabha, 1994, p.85), a non - place of *differance* (in Derrida's sense (2002) of both difference and deferral) that unsettles any notion of clear boundaries or binaries and initiates 'a principle of undecidability in the signification of part and whole, past and present, self and Other, such that there can be no negation or transcendence of difference' (Bhabha, 1994, p.77) from which he argues that ethnic and cultural difference emerges.

Such views of identity, however, are not without their critics. Butler (2003), whilst making use of psychoanalytical perspectives, also challenges such positions because she sees them as trying to suggest that they are the only way in which identity can be understood. She also charges Freudian, Lacanian and post-Lacanian theories with seeking to destabilise notions of continuity and coherence in understanding most aspects of self and identity whilst making claims for a coherent and progressive sense of gender identity by using normative 'grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1984) of child development. Holland et al (1998) also draw attention to other key criticisms of post-modern psychoanalytical theory, such as a sense that identity appears all of a piece at the resolution of the crisis brought about by the Oedipal complex (though Hall, 1996, argues that this is too literal a reading of Lacan, 1989) and a lack of consideration of how psychodynamic approaches to the understanding of sexual and gender identifications could be useful in conceptualising racial identification. In other words, the argument here is that post-psychoanalytical theories have destabilised any sense of coherence in ethnic and racial identities whilst retaining some normative notions in relation to gender and sexuality. It is

argued, in the present study, that ethnic, social, gender, racial and sexual identities are inter-related in terms of how they are constructed, experienced and enacted in different communities for particular purposes and so to treat gender and sexual identities as in some way different is not seen as helpful because they are conceived of as intersecting at the point of identity.

The Illusion of Internal Substance

The challenge remains to identify a model of making the self that breaks free of construction purely within the individual. Accounts such as those by Lacan (1989), Zizek (1989), Bhabha (1994) and Henriques et al (1998, 2nd edn), whilst in many ways reflecting a post-structuralist position, retain many internal psychoanalytical pre-given notions. The work of Sondergaard (2002) and Boldt (2002) is helpful in suggesting an alternative to the internal psychosexual conflicts that live on in many post-modern accounts. They suggest that what is needed is an understanding of the ways in which the 'discursive repertoires' (Sondergaard, 2002, p.452) that occur in local contexts construct aspects of identity such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity and of the ways in which these reflect context-specific as well as sociocultural and historical understandings. In place of a view of identity as internally driven process, they suggest that what is then needed is an understanding of how these aspects of identity become incorporated into individual consciousness through a process of sifting and synthesising. Cavarero (2000) argues that the aspects of identity that emerge are contextual, unstable, sporadic, incomplete, transitory and often apparently the result of chance 'because the weaving – work of memory' (p.35) that seeks to hold them together has the same qualities. She argues that identity is relational and is constructed through one's actions and through the (desired) narrating of one's actions under the necessary gaze of others. These conceptualisations are useful in the present study where ethnicity is viewed alongside other aspects, such as gender,

sexuality and class that emerge from the dynamics and 'discursive repertoires' of the way in which the children, the staff and the community interact and engage in practice.

The psychosexual conflicts within psychoanalytical approaches also appear to be premised on the notion that the process of the unconscious seeking resolution is one which involves identification with pre-existing and fixed notions of what gender, sexuality and ethnicity actually mean. In her work on gender identities, Butler (1999, 2nd edn) argues that this is deterministic and does not allow for multiple and co-existing identities. She argues that 'no single account of construction will do' (Butler, 1999, 2nd edn, p.xvi) and that identities are negotiated in relation with each other, being foregrounded and back-grounded in different situations. This is very useful to the present study where it is maintained that it is impossible to discuss different aspects of identity in isolation from one another.

In place of a model of identity being played out in an interior body space, Butler (1999, 2nd edn) argues that identity should be thought of as being played out in exterior space and on the body. She also argues, importantly for the present study, that the performance of identity in exterior space involves actions, gestures, images and sensory experience as well as language and that the limitations of language mean that the forms of identity that are constituted are only those that the elements of language can represent. Following Butler, Skattebol (2006, p.521) argues that 'too strong a focus on critical language renders invisible other ways children may assert, construct and reconstruct their identities'. Butler (1999, 2nd edn) maintains that the illusion of fixed and essential internalised identities is created through culturally and politically regulated, repeated and stylised performances that are '... instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous the *appearance of substance* is precisely that ... a performative accomplishment which the social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of

belief' (Butler, 1999, 2nd edn, p.179). She also argues that occasional failures of repetition and stylisation reveal the ways in which identities are illusory.

The notion of identities as performances, rather than essences, means, for Butler, the possibility of disturbing the regulated performances, thereby marking the space for agency. It is important to bear in mind Paechter's caution (2006b), however, that 'the masculinities and femininities that any individual can perform are at least in part dependent on the form of that individual's body; given the body I have, I do not have a totally free choice about who I can be'. Paechter (2006b, p.15) argues that 'we continue to use an individual's appearance to confirm or to question their membership of particular communities' and it might be suggested that skin colour may play a similar part in regulating choices in relation to ethnic identity and this will be important to consider as part of the present study. The 'regulated performances' can, perhaps, be disrupted at least and Denzin and Lincoln (1995) argue that 'If culture is an ongoing performance then performers critically bring the spaces, meanings, ambiguities, and contradictions of culture alive in their performances' (p.356). These conceptions are helpful, it will be seen, given that a key concern of the present study is to develop an analytical approach that provides for the systematic examination of the notion of both ethnic identity and research as performances in relation to a boundary (of which more later).

Negotiating Ethnicity

These conceptualisations of aspects of identity have much in common with those of Barth (1966, 1969, 1989, 2000), Calhoun (2000), Yuval-Davis (2000) and Verkuyten (2005), where ethnicity is conceived of not only as a cognitive process but also as a social practice and in fact to distinguish between these two reflects traditional psychological theory rather than sociocultural theory.

Whilst, as we saw in Chapter One, there is very little agreement in the literature about how ethnicity is treated, the work of Barth has been particularly significant in reconceptualising ethnic identity away from essentialist readings of fixity and developmental process towards a view of ethnicity as 'the cumulative result of a number of separate choices and decisions made by people acting *vis-a-vis* one another patterns are generated through processes of interaction and in their form reflect the constraints and incentives under which people act' (Barth, 1966, p.2). Ethnic identity relies in part on how we see ourselves but, also, crucially, on how others see us in any given situation. Barth's claim is that ethnic identity is a performance in relation to a boundary but that boundary is permeable, porous and plastic rather than fixed:

'we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant Some cultural features are used by actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored ...' (Barth, 1969, p.14).

Following Barth, Nederveen Pieterse (1997, p.370) argues that 'ethnicity is an inherently unstable category – as a constructed community ... its logic is that of imagination and imagination is a social practice'. Thus, according to Jenkins (1996), ethnicity is seen to be a fluid aspect of both collective and individual social identity, concerned with cultural differentiation but rooted in and the product of social interaction. It is 'externalized in social interaction and internalised in personal self-awareness' (Jenkins, 1996, p.811).

Whilst, as Jenkins notes (2004, 2nd edn), Barth's work has been criticised for focusing on the individual and neglecting collective and

political dimensions, his more recent work gives greater weight and significance to structural factors and suggests a need to think in terms of the different contexts within which ethnicity is played out. As he comments: 'People participate in multiple, more or less discrepant, universes of discourse; they construct different partial and simultaneous worlds in which they move; their cultural construction of reality springs not from one source and is not of one piece' (Barth, 1989, p.130). More recent work (Barth, 2000, p.27) goes further still noting 'there is systematic indoctrination whereby authoritative teachings are drummed in and elevated to dogma ... there will be positive encouragement for cognitive assent and agreement with others who share those interests, and sanctions will be brought to bear against its breach.' What is evident is that Barth's later work is influenced by Foucault's claims for the significance of power in the choices that are made. Foucault (1998, 2002) would maintain that understandings and performances in relation to ethnicity are underpinned by discourses of power and are constructed not only through what is done or what is said but also through what is not done and not said.

These silences are very significant in understanding experiences and performances in relation to ethnicity and take many forms. As Mazzei (2003) argues, discourses of power may mean that individuals silence and veil their own ethnicity in order to seek to avoid negative judgements about their beliefs, customs and practices. Power may also operate to silence ethnicity because of privileges of race and class amongst dominant groups. More benignly, perhaps, it may also be that awareness and sensitivity to ethnicity as difference are silenced for reasons that involve politeness or fear of offence. A need therefore arises to attend to 'what is being left out, not said, or intentionally repressed' (Mazzei, 2003, p.356) in order to seek to understand the relationship between observable effects, causal tendencies and underlying realities (of which more later).

The work of Bhabha (1994), brings together Barth's contention that ethnicity is negotiated at boundaries with Butler's notion (1999, 2nd edn) of performativity. Like Barth (1966), Bhabha argues against the notion of ethnic and cultural essentialism and conceives of ethnic and cultural identities as mimics of performances that come to be repeated and understood as part of an often illusory notion of heritage. There are some parallels here with Vygotsky's notion (1978) of fossilised behaviours 'that have lost their original appearance, and their outer appearance tells us nothing whatsoever about their internal nature' (p.64). In other words, it is argued that traditions, conventions, rituals and practices are developed in relation to ethnic, religious and cultural groups which are seen as coming to define the essence of particular groups, in the way, for instance, that Victorian conventions in relation to Christmas celebrations have come to be seen as having a basis in truth and religion whilst being a relatively recent invention: as Brah (1996, p.208) argues 'tradition is itself continually invented even as it may be hailed as originating from the mists of time'. Bhabha (1994) argues that cultural communities and individual identities are negotiated and contested in ways that may run counter to what we understand by notions such as past and present and which contest the usual expectations of change and progress. In a similar vein, Nayak (2006, p.416) argues that racial and ethnic identities are 'a fiction only ever given substance to through the illusion of performance, action and utterance, where repetition makes (them) appear as-if-real'. Following Foucault (2002), for Bhabha (1994, 1996), Hall (1996), Venn (2002) and Nayak (2006) power operates within communities to suggest the value of particular performances in which ethnic and cultural identities are tenuously stitched together in time from the splintering, the ambiguities, the places between, the excluded and the overlaps of the difference and deferral implied in the hybridity of the borderline. In other words, the practices of individuals and local communities are dynamic, negotiated and contested but power

operates to make certain ethnic and cultural traditions appear coherent, and to define and be the essence of particular groups. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is a well defined set of practices that is agreed as being associated with Christmas (trees, particular festive foods, presents, particular forms of house decoration etc.) but the actual practices of individuals will often depart from these as they seek to define their own meanings. In many cases this will go unnoticed but, where there is contravention of what is deemed acceptable, individuals and groups may be marked out for censure, marked out as not belonging.

Ethnic identity, therefore, is performed, reformed and maintained in particular communities amidst discourses of power, heritage, present circumstances and through the things that we say or do not say about ourselves, the things that we do or do not do and through the things that others say or do not say about us. There are links with Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (1990) here, whose historical, social and cultural confines determine what can be constructed. Within the *habitus*, ethnic identity is not a single performance, a unity, but many and disparate, relational to and in interaction with other personal and social categories and notions. As Brah argues (1996), it is important to understand 'how gender relations are constituted in articulation with class, racism, ethnicity and sexuality in the construction of social relation, and what types of identities are inscribed in the process' (p.67).

Brah (1996, p.208) also introduces the notion of 'diaspora space' which is important in conceptualising the dynamic nature of ethnicity. Diaspora spaces are where: 'multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed, or disavowed; where the permitted and prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the permitted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle'. She argues, following Foucault (2002), that power operates within everyday lives at the borderline between practices and ways of being which are

conceived of as socially constructed and having effects, suggesting to individuals the benefits of acting in particular ways and the disincentives and punishments for acting in a non-approved fashion. She views these negotiations as taking place within 'discursive practices' (p.248) but emphasises that this does not mean "world as text" so much as multiple modalities of meanings and practices articulating in and across economic, political and cultural fields in relations of mutual constitution and dissolution' (p.245-246). In other words, multiple ways of explaining and understanding are possible because of the multiple factors at work in shaping the decisions and practices of individuals and groups. A key concern of the present research is to examine the range of observable effects in terms of how ethnic identity is experienced in order to consider the range of factors or tendencies at work that may affect the ways in which individuals act.

Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006) make a distinction between *diaspora*, which they see as migration enforced by circumstances, and *hybridity*, which they maintain emerges from cultural and social practices and in which meaning is born of heritage but renegotiated along a trajectory to the future. Their notion of hybridity and Brah's concept of diaspora spaces seem to have much in common and are concerned with 'the complexities in how identity is articulated and represented across a terrain of intersecting and often contradictory points of self and group interest' (Robinson and Jones Diaz, 2006, p.18). The allocation of meanings in relation to ethnicity is understood as circumstantial, negotiated and renegotiated, concerned with 'absent presence' (Nayak, 2006, p.415) and 'differance' in Derrida's sense (2002) of both difference and deferral. This notion of diaspora spaces is at the heart of how performances in relation to ethnicity are conceived in the present study and at the very heart of the way in which research is understood (see later). One of the key concerns will be to explore the relationship between

agency, power and constraint within the communities of practice of home and nursery.

Significant questions are raised, however, about how far individuals and groups are able to exercise ethnic options in relation to the range of ethnic identities that are available to them. This takes us further into debates concerning the extent to which experiences and performances of ethnic identity have space for infinite variability and how far they are confined by the normalising action of power in determining what is possible within the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Song (2003) refers to the way in which ethnic identity options are exercised by 're-creating and re-inventing meanings and practices' (p.16) but her example of this occurring amongst those of mixed race seems to suggest an essentialist notion of choosing between binaries of black and white. Swidler (1986) contends that individuals can choose from the range of ethnic and cultural resources available to them, such as food, stories, artefacts and historical practices, in order to engage with the situations, issues and events that face them in life. Nagel (1994) argues that the on-going business of creating, using and re-creating these resources and practices are what constitute culture and that ethnic identity (whether individual or group) is the boundary work that determines what goes in to becoming part of the culture. This would suggest that enactments of culture are affected by ethnic identity and that as ethnic boundaries are redrawn, so are the practices that constitute its culture. Those boundary positions, however, are rarely ones of purely individual choice. Smail (2005) argues that agency is illusory and any autonomy available to individuals is merely the result of social influence made available to individuals via the operation of power at macro and micro levels. Individuals are considered only to be able to influence their circumstances, environments and situations to the extent that power affords them physical, educational, cultural, economic and ideological resources.

Nagel's position (1994, p.161) seems, in fact, to bring together much of the discussion so far in suggesting that:

'the construction of ethnic boundaries through individual identification, ethnic group formation, informal ascriptions, and official ... policies illustrates the ways in which particular ethnic identities are created, emphasized, chosen or discarded in societies. As the result of processes of negotiation and designation, ethnic boundaries wax and wane. Individual ethnic identification is strongly limited by external forces that shape the options, feasibility, and attractiveness of various ethnicities.'

Brubaker (2000, p.16) argues that the notion of ethnicity as socially constructed is 'common place' but that what is not, is the specification of 'how – and when – people identify themselves, perceive others, experience the world, interpret their predicaments and orient their actions in racial, ethnic or national rather than other terms'. If such specification is lacking in studies of adults' ethnic identities, it is almost entirely absent from studies of young children's ethnic identities and is a key concern of the present study.

Studies of Young Children's Ethnic Identities

Whilst there are numerous studies of ethnic identity in adolescence (e.g. Phinney, 1990, 1996) and a smaller number concerned with the primary years (e.g. Connolly 1995, 1998), there are very few indeed, in English, that consider the nursery years. Even a recent issue of the journal *Child Development*, which called for papers concerned with racial and ethnic identity, published no contributions concerning young children, whilst having a number that considered middle and late childhood and adolescence (Altschul et al, 2006; Pahl and Way, 2006; Seaton et al, 2006; Whitesell et al, 2006, Yip et al, 2006).

Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006, p.76) highlight that there is a lack of research that has considered how 'young children negotiate racialised identities within a context of whiteness and dominant early childhood curriculum frameworks'. Much existing literature is not helpful because it is concerned with older children and it is also not relevant because it is largely concerned with ethnic identity in relation to discriminatory practices. As Hall (2003, p.93) notes 'we still have a great deal of work to do to decouple ethnicity, as it functions in the dominant discourse, from its equivalence with ..racism'.

Even the small number of studies that do focus on nursery aged children (see, for example, Holmes, 1995; Averhart and Bigler, 1997; Adler, 2001; Kowalski and Lo, 2001; Kowalski, 2003) have little relevance here because they have a quite different theoretical and methodological approach from the present study, reflecting an essentialist view of ethnic identity rather than one concerned with 'contextual and relational *positioning*' (Dwyer, 2000, p.475). A recent study by Tudge et al (2006) does set out to use an ethnographic approach to study what it terms the every day experiences of three year old children in different cultures but it does so in order to consider how early childhood activities are affected by racial, ethnic and sociocultural contexts rather than studying how the sociocultural context of everyday experiences shape ethnic identity. The approach is also different in that it is based on normative notions of development, uses coding and quantitative analysis and recognises the significant draw back that its 'focus was on *what* the children experienced (their daily activities) and not on *how* they experienced them' (p. 1464, original emphasis).

The present study is concerned with how ethnic identities are experienced and performed in a setting where white-indigenous and children of Pakistani-heritage come together and what this means for who they are. The interest is in all of the children, not just in those of Pakistani-heritage and so understanding what it means to be of

white-indigenous heritage is as important as understanding what it means to be of Pakistani–heritage in that community. As Robinson and Jones Diaz (2006, p.66) argue ‘whiteness, like other racial and social identities, is a socio-historical construction Consequently, it is not a fixed, stable or biological entity, but rather it can be invented, lived, modified and discarded.’ It will be particularly important to bear in mind Gedalof’s (1999) and Pearce’s (2003, 2004) contention that the invisibility of whiteness (as the implicit and unstated norm in the West) generally means that those of white-indigenous origin remain static, despite living in a non-static location.

Though concerned with a slightly older age group, the closest link is possibly with the work of Brooker (2002a, 2002b) who studies ethnic identity through the framework of Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* (1990) and with Eckert and McConnell–Ginet (1992, 1999), colleagues of Wenger, who initially used a combined communities of practice and sociolinguistic approach to study gender (1992) and then later to look at how gender, class, age and ethnic identity interact in adolescence. As in the case of the present study, Eckert and McConnell–Ginet (1992) draw attention to the significance of power and difference in understanding identity but emphasise that this is not a concern with discrimination per se but with how power and difference interact to construct the social practices that determine aspects of identity. There are some parallels too with the work of Dwyer (2000) and Archer (2004) in terms of their critical stance and use of ‘difference’ and ‘diaspora’ in exploring ethnic (and other) identities, though they do not use a community of practice framework and do not study young children. There are further parallels with the work of Nilsen (2005) who is seeking to ‘explore further constructions of social relations, gender and identity’ (p.121) amongst nursery–aged children in Norway using an ethnographic approach. Her emergent work is pointing to the concept of ‘we-ness’ as being important: ‘there is a movement between being together and not, being friends and not, a fluidity between inclusion and exclusion’ (p. 123).

There is growing interest in young children's ethnic identities. The majority of current research in English in this field is emerging from a group of Australian, American and Scandinavian academics who are interested in diversity and equality more generally in early childhood (see, for example, Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001a; Cannella and Viruru, 2004; Rhedding-Jones, 2001; MacNaughton, 2000; Yelland, 1998; Bundgaard & Gullov, 2006; Lappalainen, 2006; Fleer, 2006). This work has tended to focus particularly on the ways in which ethnic diversity is or is not reflected in early childhood provision and in the training of early childhood workers and on means of reducing discrimination. However, as Skattebol (2005) notes, that there is little critical theory regarding how children are positioned through ethnicity and gender and, I would argue, regarding the ways that children themselves take up positions.

It is also significant that though such perspectives regarding gender are underpinned by critical approaches, ethnic identity tends to be viewed in ways that suggest the fixities of essentialism. Rhedding-Jones (2002) acknowledges a need to move beyond essentialist notions and beyond binaries in relation to ethnic identity but maintains that this is difficult because 'a shifting ethnicity in post-modernity includes the modernist fixing of identity, as related to race, religion, country of residence and change' (Rhedding-Jones, 2001, p.152). Much of Rhedding-Jones' work then appears to seek to work with these 'fixings' and to consider the ways in which account is taken or not taken of the needs of those groups. Whilst this work has begun to consider what ethnic identity actually means and the ways in which it is expressed and experienced, it has not done so through exploring children's lived experience in the way that the present study seeks to do and has focused much more on adult responses to ethnic differences within particular communities. It may, however, be useful to consider what the significance of the shiftings and the fixings is to how we may understand young children's ethnic identity.

The work of Verkuyten (2005) contains similar tensions and points to the problems of defining ethnic identity and to the concern to avoid essentialist definitions. She argues for a conception of ethnic identity that is concerned with the reflexive interaction between the individual and the social as the basis of the project of identity which involves 'the intricacies, paradoxes, dilemmas, contradictions, imperatives, superficialities, and profundities of the way individuals relate to and are related to the world in which they live' (p.42). Verkuyten (2005) also warns, however, that such a position risks undermining what is distinctive about ethnic identity as opposed to any other form of identity. She argues that it is the early affective identification with the immediate family and experience of the tools of culture, such as language, clothes, values, heritage and religion, that create enduring aspects of ethnic identity. Whilst such certainty is contrary to the spirit of the present study, it does begin to open up a critical realist space of tendencies and effects that is useful in studying ethnic identity.

Critical realism is closely associated with Bhaskar (1998a) who argues that the social world pre-exists people and cannot be reduced simply to human agents and actions but is not independent of them. At the same time, the maintenance and transformation of the materials, relations, values and beliefs of society (for example in relation to ethnic identity) depend on human agency and activity and, therefore, are situational and temporal. The form that this agency can take in reproducing, understanding and transforming is itself constrained by social structures but these social structures are in turn to be understood as social products which are subject to change and 'so may be only relatively enduring' (p.218). In the case of the present study, the social practices of the homes, families and nursery and the beliefs and practices in relation to ethnic identity are understood as dependent upon but existing before, after and beyond the people who currently live and work there. This link between the

individual and the social structures Bhaskar sees as the linking of psychology with sociology and it is a linking that can also be seen in Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice model, which will be discussed later. The complex dyspraxic relationship between effects and structures can be seen in every day life and is indicative, for Bhaskar (1998b), of causal tendencies. This critical realist approach to examining effects and causal tendencies will be examined further in the Methodology Chapter but, for present purposes, it means that performances, actions and behaviours become the basis for questions about what ethnic identity must mean for children for them to act as they do.

The Practices of Early Childhood Education

In order to explore the ways in which performances in relation to ethnicity operate in a nursery setting, it is necessary also to examine key priorities and beliefs in relation to early childhood education and how these might relate to ethnic identity. These views are likely to affect how the significance of ethnic identity is viewed and the ways in which power operates to mark out some practices and beliefs as significant and to silence others, which will have consequences for the communities of practice that operate in the nursery. Many models of early childhood development and education continue to reflect beliefs emanating from the ideas of Rousseau (1993) and developed by Froebel (2003), Isaacs (1968) and Montessori (1975), which hold that development and learning occur naturally and from within, much in the manner, as we have seen, that traditional theories of ethnicity hold that notions of ethnic identity 'develop' from within.

Throughout the later twentieth century, developmental psychology gained influence in the West and became the 'grand narrative' (Lyotard, 1984, p.xxiii) that underpinned early childhood education. The normalising discourses of developmental psychology are considered by Grieshaber and Cannella (2001b) to seek to explain

the individual from within in terms of internal processes which are understood as universal scientific truths which, therefore, explain everybody. As Cannella notes (1997), the period between the 1960s and the 1980s was one in which child-centred developmental individualism based on the ideas of Piaget (1975) was perceived to be widespread in early childhood education. The view, drawing upon Piaget's notions of stages of development, was that stimulating active learning environments should be created for children but that their learning would follow in the trail of naturally occurring development.

As Penn (2005) notes, since the late 1980s, whilst the influence of Piaget and Rousseau has far from disappeared, the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1966) have become better known, constructing the child as an apprentice, learning about what matters in the culture alongside significant adults, and influencing them in turn. The current statutory *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (QCA, 2000) places particular emphasis on 'promoting children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable' (p.22), and on 'using conversation and carefully framed questions because this is crucial in developing children's knowledge' (p.22). Despite the apparent influence of Vygotsky's ideas and sections of the *Guidance* addressing diversity and requiring that 'practitioners should plan to meet the needs ofchildren from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups ...and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds' (QCA, 2000, p.17), Soler and Miller (2003) and Osgood (2006) argue that the model underpinning policy initiatives and frameworks in England is an instrumental and centralist one where development and learning are seen as straightforwardly sequential, progressive and assessable and where there is little recognition of the significance of socio-cultural context. This is an important matter in the present study and raises issues

about how appropriate the offered curriculum is in relation to local circumstances.

The *Early Years Foundation Stage* materials (DfES, 2007a, 2007b), which will replace the current *Curriculum Guidance* in September 2008, reflect some social constructivist ideas, stating, for example, 'Through play, in a secure but challenging environment with effective adult support, children can: explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to make sense of the world; practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills' (DfES, 2007b, p.7). There is also much more attention paid than previously to awareness of ethnic, religious and cultural differences but there is even greater emphasis than previously on notions such as stages of development and developmentally appropriate practice, bearing out Kwon's contention (2002, p.6.) that 'sequential developmentalism is one of the most influential beliefs in English early years education'. Concerns for meeting 'children's needs' (as defined by developmental psychology) sit, perhaps uneasily, alongside politico-economic circumstances and the modernist project of 'progress' with a commitment to helping 'young children achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being' (DfES, 2007a, p.7).

It could also be argued, however, as do Cannella (1997), Fler (2003) and Ailwood (2003), that in locating children in the magic garden of a romanticised childhood and a process of development that mark them out as special and different from adults, the power of state economic priorities and child-centred early childhood education combine to remove children further from power, influence and the life of the adult community. Cannella and Viruru (2004, p. 3) argue that 'the labels, forms of representation, and positions imposed on those who are younger can be categorised as oppressive, controlling, and even colonizing'. Whilst Kendrick (2005) views imaginative play as

providing opportunities for children to experience belonging to identity communities through imagination (in Wenger's sense, 1998, see later), a childhood of play experiences for children could be read as further marginalisation. Such a view of childhood and early childhood education also 'suggests that there is a universal state that we should all be striving for which is based on western notions of doing and knowing' (Yelland and Kilderry, 2005, p.5). The emphasis on particular environments and provision, the significance of adult-child interaction and the importance of children's 'needs' (all of them constructed in a white, middle-class model) 'creates the illusion of freedom to function and think in a theoretically pre-determined direction' (Cannella and Viruru, 2004, p.95) and is 'significant not only for what they explicitly produce, but also for what they silence and marginalise' (Ailwood, 2003, p.295). These will be important matters to consider in the present study where few of the children are middle-class and very few are white.

Ethnic Identity in Home and Nursery: Exploring Communities of Practice

What is needed now is a theoretical framework that enables the study of the way that the children and adults 'identify themselves, perceive others, experience the world, interpret their predicaments and orient themselves' (Brubaker, 2000, p.16) and also one which brings all these positions together into a more coherent approach. The concern is, as for Holland et al (1998, p.8), to understand how identities are shaped 'as the outcome of living in, through, and around the cultural forms practised in social life'. Where this begins to lead is towards a theoretical framework that fuses the cognitive with the social in a constant interplay of negotiated and distributed iterative practices spanning the individual and the communities in which s/he lives, a model viewed as useful to the purposes of this study. Aspects of identity are thus conceptualised as emerging from

and being played out in the interface between inextricably linked cognitive processes and social practices.

So we come to Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation and Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice, which are viewed as providing a framework within which to explore experiences in the home, the nursery setting and the wider community, as the loci of shared constructions, discourses, understandings, performances and practices in relation to ethnic identity. As Bucholtz notes (1999), such an approach provides a focus on actions and social practices whilst language is viewed as only one facet of these. The model is seen, therefore, as particularly suitable, given that the language abilities of the children are affected by their age and the status of many of them as speakers of English as an additional language. Lave and Wenger's theory (1991) was developed from research with apprentice tailors and explored the ways in which they initially engaged in legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice of tailors, undertaking non-crucial tasks, that would not put the entire undertaking at risk if not completed wholly successfully, progressing to full participation. Rogoff et al (2003) add the insight that, in the early stages of participation, children learn by intently observing and listening in on adults and other children. How well individuals are able to observe and listen is likely to influence how effectively and how quickly they learn, an important consideration given that some of the children in the present study are likely to be better placed to listen than others, depending on their language competence.

Wenger (1998) outlines the elements of a community of practice. He argues that it involves: mutual engagement in handling diversity and difference in order to create a shared way of doing things (in the present study, very important given the ethnicities of the children attending the nursery); joint enterprise, involving negotiation, co-ordination, mutual accountability (in this case, pertaining to the

nursery staff, parents, the local community and factors at the regional and national levels); and a shared repertoire of experiences, discourses, stories, history, styles (significant as children from different ethnic groups became members of the nursery). It is important to recognise that it involves both explicit, tangible items but also all the things that are implicit and assumed as shared knowledge and resources. Relationships between people in a community of practice 'are complex mixtures of power and dependenceexpertise and helplessness.... authority and collegiality....resistance and compliance....trust and suspicion, friendship and hatred' (Wenger, 1998, p.77). Whilst Foucault (2002) would argue that agency is but another manifestation of the operation of power from the macro level, Wenger argues that external forces have no direct power because he believes that what is important and acted upon is worked out at the local level. In this model, there is no division between the individual and the social, each co-constructs the other, though with differing levels of skill and aptitude at the outset. Wenger (1998) also draws parallels between the processes that are involved in learning skills through legitimate peripheral participation in community practices and those that are involved in shaping identity. Identity is seen as being experienced and performed through involvement in communities of practice that include identification, negotiability and reification of identity as a 'learning trajectory' (p.149) that involves engagement, imagination and alignment and the possibilities of participation and non-participation.

Wenger conceives of identity as being shaped in practices within localised communities but going beyond them because of the ways in which local communities relate to what Bronfenbrenner (1979) would term the macro level, involving national, cultural and societal institutions, structures and influences. Identity is seen as emerging from identification and from negotiability of meanings within communities of practice through engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement involves the ongoing negotiation of

meaning, the formation of trajectories and unfolding of histories of practice. Imagination involves understanding how our experiences and practices relate to those of others in another place and time. It includes both a personal sense of these connections and a group sense. In the case of ethnic identity, for example, it entails projecting to other places (such as Pakistan and other towns in Northern England, in this case) where others may share certain characteristics. As Wenger notes, however, as well as helping us to see ourselves differently through a connection with others, it can also be the source of stereotyping, rootlessness and lack of connection. Alignment necessitates understanding how our practices are connected with others in similar situations and institutions and is underpinned by the operation of power to bring about social action. Religions, nations and movements all involve alignment.

Negotiating meanings is conceived as occurring within economies of meaning. These are made up of: a social system of relative values, which lead to meanings having different degrees of currency; the negotiated character of these relative values, with participants having differential degrees of control over meanings that are produced; the possibility of accumulating ownership of meaning, with the constant possibility of such positions being contested; and systems of legitimation in relation to the processes of negotiation. The negotiation of meanings is a productive process, but negotiating meaning is not constructing it from scratch. Meaning is not pre-existing, but neither is it simply made up. In terms of identity, this means 'a tendency to come up with certain interpretations, to engage in certain actions, to make certain choices, to value certain experiences' (Wenger, 1998, p.153). It also means that when the unexpected is experienced, then a sense of boundary and lack of understanding of the expected behaviours and practices is the result.

Wenger's contention is also that we experience who we are in part through awareness of who and what we are not. Non-participation in

a community of practice, whether in terms of identification or the ability to affect the negotiability of meanings is seen as taking different forms which are more or less significant. Not to participate in a community of practice that is glimpsed but not central to one's practice is less significant than not being able to participate in a community of practice where one would expect to have a role to play. Rogoff et al (2003) draw attention to the ways in which children are routinely segregated from certain forms of adult activity but also to the way in which observation and listening in are used by children in anticipating participation. Peripherality is understood by Wenger as a part of a staged journey to participation but marginality arises from the road to participation being blocked off. Ethnicity, for Wenger (1998, p.168), is marked by the boundary between what one is and what one is not and so 'this situation makes boundary crossing difficult, because each side is defined by opposition to the other and membership in one community implies marginalisation in another'. Non-participation can emerge from institutional practices as a strategic response from those involved to the institution and its values. It can also be a way of dealing with painful situations that one does not have the power or influence to change.

In terms of ethnic identity, reification involves both ethnic and cultural products and the process through which the community of practice 'produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts that reify something of that practice in congealed form' (Wenger, 1998, p. 59). Reification often originates from the macro level but is given meaning through processes at the micro. Reification has echoes of what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as 'fossilised behaviours' whose origins have been lost but is considered always to be in-process and potentially to be both useful and misleading. Identity work, therefore, involves both participation and reification and the duality is used to 'secure some continuity ... across time and space' (Wenger, 1998, p.63). It is the interplay of the 'necessary others' of

participation and reification that is significant to how identities are experienced and enacted.

The practice and performance of identity also involves identification with particular communities of practice, the ways in which the boundaries between different forms of community membership are 'brokered' and reconciled to form one 'nexus' of identity, negotiability in shaping the meanings of the different communities of practice and negotiation of the relationship between membership of local communities of belonging and those at the macro level. Significantly for the present study, Wenger (1998) draws attention to the complexity of brokering and to the significance of those carrying out the brokering having sufficient 'legitimacy' to influence practice and resolve contradiction and disagreement. Boundaries, for Wenger (1998), are marked by objects and practices (Herne, 2006, refers also to 'boundary events', such as visits and meetings) concerned not only with disconnection but also with connection. Boundary practices may be concerned with 'a form of collective brokering' (p.114) that seeks to resolve conflicts between different practices. Wenger refers also to 'overlaps' where people may have a special form of identity or special skills but where the involvement of these people in both specialist work and in generic work supporting those with less expert knowledge is important in brokering communities of practice. The final form of practice-based connection that Wenger identifies involves peripheries of participation where people are partly outside and connected with other communities of practice but partly inside and therefore able to have some influence on the negotiation of new meanings.

Wenger (1998) argues that the community of practice model is useful for understanding aspects of identity such as ethnicity, race and gender. The work of Paechter (2003a, 2003b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) has looked in more depth at how gender may be understood in this way. Parker (2006) examines working class masculinity and football

culture as a community of practice and studies the boundaries with sexuality and race. Whilst Husband (2005) has examined the media as a community of practice in which ethnic and professional identities are negotiated and pays particular attention to the invisibility of whiteness in the shaping of identities, no detailed consideration is given to the ways in which Wenger (1998) argues that identities are formed. The present study seeks to study the interplay and the tension which Wenger (1998) identifies as the children come to develop identities of participation or non-participation as members of the nursery and the local community and identities of full, partial or non-participation in the meanings about ethnicity that are negotiated and renegotiated. The concern will be to explore, as Wenger notes (1998, p.119), 'who belongs and who does not, how boundaries are defined, and what kinds of periphery are open' because 'boundaries of practice are constantly renegotiated, defining much more fluid and textured forms of participation' (Wenger, 1998, p.119).

It is significant for the theoretical model of ethnic identity underpinning the present study that Wenger (1998) sees identity work as both reproductive and *transformative* in relation to the context in which it takes place. It is also important to understand that the notion of ethnic identity as a community of practice does not indicate a concern for homogeneity and continuity but rather '*constellations* of interconnected practices' (Wenger, 1998, p.127) that include the discontinuities involved. Ethnic identity as a constellation of practices provides for local and global identities as 'related levels of participation that always co-exist and shape each other' (Wenger, 1998, p.131).

Criticisms and additional insights in relation to the communities of practice model tend to focus on two main issues: a claim that more consideration is needed of how power and macro level factors affect both local communities and individuals and a claim that more account needs to be taken of the effect of individual agency within

communities of practice. Bergvall (1999), Corbin et al (2003) and Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson (2004) maintain, with some justification, that whilst the possibility of macro level communities of practice is raised by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), most of their attention is focused on the micro level and insufficient attention is paid to political, cultural, societal and ideological beliefs. This could be seen to reflect a belief that learning and development occur in local contexts and that, as Eckert and McConnell (1992, 1999), Ehrlich (1999) and Freed (1999) seek to make clear, whilst macro level factors are significant, meanings, beliefs and events emerge at the micro level and reflect individual and local agency, and macro level meanings may not map entirely consistently on to local practices. This would suggest a 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' model of the operation of power, seemingly at odds with the stance of Foucault (2002). This is where critical realism is considered helpful because all levels are considered in determining that which is 'real' and not 'real'.

A number of studies point to the ways in which communities of practice need to be understood as emerging from the power dynamics of the tension between the micro and the macro. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) and Stapleton (2001, 2003) argue that the micro level community of practice can only be understood fully by reference to the macro, a view consistent with the stance in the present study. This is particularly evident in Ehrlich's study (1999) of a rape hearing and Ostermann's (2003) examination of the responses of female police officers to female victims where political views and affiliations at the macro level come to affect the complexity of how identities are understood at the micro community of practice level. There are similar findings from Freed's study (1999) of pregnancy as a community of practice where she identifies control being exercised by 'a master narrative about pregnancy' (p.262).

As well as the power dynamics of the relationship between micro and macro communities of practice, the power dynamic between individuals and communities is also a focus of discussion in the literature. Blaka and Filstad (2007) argue that newcomers who understand the language and cultural practices and are able to ask questions find negotiating access easier than those who lack this knowledge and ability and who 'can be overshadowed and remain on the outskirts for a long time' (p.66). The work of Paechter (2003a, 2003b, 2006b) has drawn attention to the ways in which power, naming and knowledge serve to legitimate (or not) participation in particular identity communities. Drawing upon Foucault's conception of the operation of power (2002), Paechter (2006b) examines, in particular, the way in which the gaze of those with power within a local community of practice operates to mark certain bodily performances as legitimate and to marginalise others. The newcomers in any setting are, therefore, seen as being forever aware of the gaze in the performances in which they engage. This gaze is seen as going beyond surface appearances to also legitimize or marginalize the opinions and values of newcomers, who, in turn, self-monitor. Lineham and McCarthy (2000) also argue that the dialogue between the individual and the community is not one of equals and that the community is seen largely as pre-existing. A number of responses then become possible. One could be that identified by Hundeide (2003) who suggests that counter-cultural organisations may operate as a particular form of community of practice for those who experience marginalisation. Hodges (1998) illustrates how an individual may participate whilst experiencing 'dis-identification' because the individual's beliefs and world view do not sit easily with those who hold power and shape the dominant communities of practices.

In contrast to the marginalisation implicit in the above positions, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003) and Maynard (2001) argue that more account needs to be taken of how individual dispositions and

responses affect and shape participation in communities of practice. Lineham and McCarthy (2000) and Renold (2004) draw usefully upon Davies and Harre's (1999) notion of 'positioning' to suggest that individuals have a far wider range of participation choices than suggested by Wenger (1998), with individuals being able 'to position themselves as well as being 'positioned by others through social interaction' (Renold, 2004, p.249). Gutierrez and Rogoff (2005, p.22) suggest that 'people develop dexterity in determining which approach from their repertoire is appropriate under which circumstances.' It could be argued that this is not very different from Lave and Wenger's view (1991) that individual dispositions and responses cannot be separated from the communities in which they are practised or from the workings of the *habitus*, as conceived of by Bourdieu (1990). Abreu and Cline (2003) argue, however, that a developmental component needs to be added to the way in which children negotiate aspects of their identities in communities of practice. They suggest that children initially internalise the given identities of home and community and only later come to exercise choice and self-identification in relation to those identities, though following Smail (2005), only to the extent that choice is available. Children are seen as coming to identify themselves by identifying others and through their experiences of how they are themselves identified by significant others as they engage in community practices. At one level these conceptions of self and other could be seen to be similar to those of Cavarero (2000), at another the notion of subjection involved could be seen to echo the way that Butler (2003) argues that identity work involves accepting the actions of power in locating us in relation to the psychoanalytical Other because it is desired as the only means of becoming and existing.

Another significant issue raised by Bergvall (1999), Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004), Fuller et al (2005) and Yandell and Turvey (2007) is that Lave and Wenger's (1991) model is premised on community members having differing levels of skill, with a flow of learning

predominantly from 'old timer' to 'novice' at first, moving to a more equal status until the one-time novice becomes the old timer and teaches the new novice. This raises the question of whether learning can occur between those with equal skill and knowledge. In the case of the present study, can novices learn nothing about their ethnic identities from their own communities of practice with other novices? Such critiques may be considered unfair since they appear to lack understanding of the ways in which transformation within communities of practice is inter-relational and based on mutuality, involving individual change and change to the community of practice, as recognised by Blaka and Filstad (2007), for example.

Bearing in mind the above responses to Lave and Wenger's communities of practice model, it is necessary, therefore, to consider how these issues will be addressed in the present study. As will be evident from what has gone before, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) is seen as useful in helping to shed light on the ways in which communities of practice operate and are inter-related at micro, meso and macro levels. This poses its own problems in the sense that Bronfenbrenner was arguing for a coherent and interconnected framework as the context within which children's development occurs and this does not seem to take sufficient account of the ways in which power is considered to operate within critical accounts, a criticism that was levelled at the communities of practice model.

If one looks again at the micro, meso and macro systems and the communities of practice model, however, and considers them not only in terms of their connections but also in terms of the disconnections, false starts and contrary effects, then one begins to see the models as the unstable framework within which life and development are played out. Wenger's (1998) notions of learning trajectory and nexus need to be understood in terms of Bourdieu's insight (1990) that: 'Each state of the social world is thus no more than a temporary equilibrium, a moment in the dynamics through

which the adjustment between distributions and incorporated or institutionalised classifications is constantly broken and restored' (p.141). Individuals are thus enmeshed within communities of practice at micro, meso and macro levels, which provide unity and disunity, which connect and disconnect and where power operates at the same levels to shape ethnic identity but where this shaping is a constant dance of positioning with moments of continuity, discontinuity, participation, peripheral participation, marginalisation, disidentification and resistance. As Calhoun (2000, p.10) argues 'ethnicity exists and has long been produced precisely in relation to disruptions and changes of scale, shifting relations between locally produced identities and claims to solidarity in larger contexts'.

Reviewing the Terrain

In a recent special issue of the *Child Development* journal concerned with racial and ethnic identity, Quintana et al (2006, p.1140) argue 'Future research needs to continue to disentangle the influences of sociocultural variables of race, ethnicity, culture, immigration, acculturation, and social class and to understand how these variables interact with other variables and with context'. This review of the literature has sought to explore how these aspects of identity interact but to see them as 'variables' is misleading to say the least. There is a clear sense that it is not possible to discuss ethnic identity in isolation from other forms of identity such as gender, sexuality and class and what is important is an awareness of the ways in which different aspects are more or less important in relation to and in comparison with others, depending on the particular performance and the operation of power. What seems to emerge from the literature in relation to ethnic identity is a sense of real, perceived or imagined heritage; real, perceived or imagined kinship; complexity, paradox and shifting performances at boundaries which are permeable but which are also marked by at least temporary fixings which identify what is common as well as what is different.

Ethnicity is understood as dynamic, slippery and somewhat indefinable whilst at the same time being a significant feature in the way that human beings are defined and understand the world. Ethnicity may be conceived of in this sense both as 'being' (ontology) and 'knowing' (epistemology), in much the same way that Wickramasinghe (2006, p.607) argues in relation to gender that 'an aspect of being is a way of knowing while that way of knowing also counts as a sense of being'. Rather as Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) argue, ethnicity is not singular or static but is played out in dynamic tension between the relatively stable qualities and features of social and cultural communities and contexts and individuals who seek to negotiate their emerging, evolving and changing ethnicities, transforming both communities and individuals in the process. Ethnic identity is thus conceived of as emerging from practices and communities and is mediated and brokered by access to participation. In this sense, following O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007), Tobbell and Lawthom (2005) and Tobbell and O'Donnell (2005), participation may be understood as an ontological imperative because, without it, ethnic identity, and other forms of identity, cannot emerge. None of this happens simply, it is embedded in the myriad of power relations which shape the world. Understanding these forms and repertoires of participation provides the epistemological means of examining the ontological nature of ethnic identity.

Having explored the ways in which identity generally, ethnic identity in particular and appropriate practices in early years education have been conceived in the literature, the concern of the next part of this study will be to examine suitable ways of carrying out the research in order to explore its aims: the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity, how the children to be studied view their own ethnicity and that of others through their activities and language; the part that a particular nursery, the adults there and other children play in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity; the part

played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity; and the wider implications of the research and its practical application in early childhood education.

Chapter Three:

Methodology

Introduction

A key concern in any piece of research is to ensure that the methodological approach is consistent with its main focus and aims. This chapter will discuss the methodological decisions that were made in relation to the present study. It will begin with a discussion regarding research paradigms and will then examine the broad methodological approach taken, in this case ethnography, before moving on to discuss ethical and procedural matters and models of ethnographic analysis .

Research Paradigms

Whilst a detailed consideration of philosophical positions underpinning research is beyond the scope of the current study, it is important to give some consideration to the ways in which the possibilities of what can be found out through research and enquiry have been conceived in order to understand how exploration of ethnic identity has been framed. As Jones et al (2005) note, in the West, the Enlightenment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is generally understood to have marked humanity's intellectual journey out of the so-called 'dark ages', with a growing belief that the world could be understood in human terms by reference to rationality and logic. There was a move towards scientific enquiry and a search for certainties about the scientific nature of the world. According to Sikes (2004), positivism was the key position that emerged from the Enlightenment, with a belief that reality is objective, fixed and unchanging and a concern to uncover fixed laws and facts about the world through empirical investigation, using scientific and quantitative methods. For the positivist, the social world can be understood in the same terms as the physical and social facts are understood as

objective truths. If a truth cannot be verified through systematic investigation then it is considered a fiction. Positivism maintains that all social behaviour has an observable cause and effect, that social behaviour is understood by observation or experimentation in order to explain and predict social action, that objectivity is important to yield 'social facts' and that internal factors such as intentions, purposes, motives, feelings, are not social facts because they are not verifiable or measurable and, therefore, they have no place within research.

As de Landsheere (1993) points out, the second half of the twentieth century, however, saw significant challenges being made to the position outlined above from interpretivist and, later, from critical perspectives. The whole ontological basis for research came to be questioned with significant doubts being raised about the existence of an objective external reality. There was a growing, though contested, belief that social reality does not exist independently from those who create it and that understanding those who are involved in creating it should be a key consideration for the qualitative researcher. It came to be argued that social reality is not the same as physical reality and the social sciences are not the same as the natural sciences and so the same forms of analysis should not be applied. According to this view, definite facts and knowledge can never be identified no matter how carefully one enquires because all knowledge is culturally and temporally located. As Phillips (1993, p.59) acknowledges, whilst criticizing qualitative approaches, 'nothing is known with such certainty that all possibility of future revision is removed. All knowledge is tentative.'

Within critical perspectives, such as post-structuralism, post-feminism and post-colonialism, Denzin and Lincoln (1995) argue that reality and knowledge are understood as further underpinned by discourses that emerge from class, race, gender, sexuality and religion as they are shot through by politico-economic power

relations. Clarke (2005) maintains that these critical positions mean that knowledge needs to be understood as situated and multiple, that research and analysis are to be understood as located in the specific research situation and embodied in particular people, that there needs to be a shift from a concern with sameness and coherence to one that considers difference and multiplicity and that there needs to be a commitment to 'troubling' and 'reading against the grain' (p. 78) of seemingly established concepts to open up other possibilities of understanding.

This stance may be seen to take us to the very limits of the comfortable and points to the challenges of representing the multiple realities that must be explored as part of the research in order to seek to better understand children's experiences of ethnic identity. It disturbs the parameters between which research is usually carried out and understood and 'is theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, non-rectifiable, and paradoxical' (Lyotard, 1984, p.60). It raises questions about:

'the boundaries that research conjures, and maintains, in order to produce truth, certainty and authenticity – boundaries between representation and reality, sincerity and pretence, rational and irrational... self and other The possibility of any breach in those boundaries is .. generally treated as a threat to be contained, lest mischief and paradox should be unleashed upon an orderly world' (Maclure, 2003, p.149).

The present study seeks to treat 'mischief and paradox' as phenomena 'to be engaged rather than evaded' Maclure, 2003, p.149) as it 'generates blind spots and defers consensus' (Lyotard, 1984, p.61) but examines all of these as evidence of causal

tendencies that point to what lies beyond and between in terms of how young children's ethnic identities are to be understood.

Such critical approaches to research have themselves, however, been challenged on a number of grounds. Phillips (1993) takes issue with interpretative and critical perspectives for seemingly arguing that the findings of all research are relative and of equal value and argues that the findings of some research are more worthwhile than others, if only because the research has been carried out carefully. He argues that 'if a shoddy inquiry is to be trusted as much as a careful one, then it is pointless to inquire carefully' (p.61). By contrast, Eisner (1993) argues that it should not be assumed that we see the world as it really is simply because we are able to organise and control it in particular ways.

These debates surrounding the purpose of carrying out research if nothing could be discovered with any certainty led to the emergence of critical realist perspectives in the late twentieth century. As Houston (2001) points out, social constructionist and post-social constructionist approaches have been important in problematizing notions of what is 'normal' but the relativism that follows in their wake makes it very difficult for research to lead to any conclusions and so the very reason for carrying out research seems to be called into question. In a professional doctorate, in this case concerned with how we understand ethnic identity in young children, and where the concern is with changing practice, it will be seen, as Scollon (2003) argues, that this is, at the least, a problematic theoretical position. Whilst research might very usefully seek to problematise current, dominant or common sense understandings about the world, surely, it is also concerned with making a contribution to our understanding and hopes to engage people in new ways of understanding that change how we act in the world.

Porter argues (1993) for a critical realist position that adds the complexities of interpretivist understandings about ontology and epistemology to the increasingly untenable certainties of positivism and that provides another way of thinking about the relationship between power and agency in post-structuralist accounts. As we saw in the Literature Review, critical realism argues that the social world pre-exists people and cannot be reduced simply to human agents and actions but is not independent of them. The maintenance and development of any given society is seen as depending on the actions of human beings in specific places and at particular times. Human ability to sustain, improve and transform is in turn itself inhibited by social structures, which are themselves subject to change. The effects of these structures can be seen in every day life but there is no one-to-one relationship between effects, causes and structures and there may be numerous effects with numerous causes. The notion that there are effects that can be seen, however, leads Bhaskar (1998b) to argue that there must be pre-existing causal structures. Causes are viewed by Bhaskar (1998c) as tendencies rather than as certainties and their effects may not be seen or even actually occur. These causal tendencies are seen by Bhaskar, however, as evidence of an external reality, independent of human perceptions of it. In the case of this study, this means questioning what ethnic identity must mean for the children to act as they do. Chouliaraki (2002, p.107) argues against this move to metaphysical explanations of reality as leaving questions unanswered and as unnecessarily creating 'closure within a single theoretical universe'. Bearing this criticism in mind, the concern of the present study will be to examine the multiple ways in which ethnic identity might be understood but, taking account of as many perspectives as possible, to seek out understandings that provide some basis for action in terms of the provision that is made for children.

Critical realist perspectives maintain that a key concern for the social scientist is to provide an adequate account of observable effects. Whilst the ethnographic approach used, with its detailed observations of everyday activity, is well suited to this purpose, it is no easy task because, as Porter (1993) points out, 'the representational aspect of research remains problematic' since 'the issue is not simply how the researcher perceives data, it is also how s/he portrays it' (p.594). Describing the effects carefully is very important because an inadequate conceptualisation of effects will lead to difficulties in seeking to understand the causal tendencies that underpin them. Sayer (1998) thus argues that any explanation will not do as well as any other because explanations need to be 'rational abstractions' rather than 'chaotic conceptions'. Houston (2001) makes clear that this is a point of departure from social constructivist perspectives that accept different view points as equally valid.

In summary, in the case of the present study, at the level of ontology, the premise is that social reality does not exist independently from those who create it, though it does not exist only in the present through its current human agents. It has both a past and a future, across time and space, created by ancestors and descendants who shape it and its institutions and who are shaped by them in turn. At the level of epistemology, the stance is that the evidence that emerges from research can never consist of definite facts or knowledge because all knowledge is tentative because it is necessarily interpreted but there is a concern to carry out research that is as careful and as authentic as possible and which studies what the staff, children and families do and say in order to seek to understand what ethnic identity must mean for those effects to occur. Ethnicity is understood both as a way of being and as way of knowing.

Research and Performance

Any piece of research, I would maintain, needs to be understood as a performance. This being the case, then only research conducted in actual contexts could be acceptable. This performance is based in what critical realists (see, for example, Fairclough et al, 2002) term the 'real' in that structures and causal powers are present but how they are experienced when activated in the 'actual' depends on multiple shifting boundaries of context, power relations, point in history, time of year, gender, race, culture, class and religion. There are echoes here of the way in which, elsewhere in this study, consideration is given to ethnic identity as a migratory performance in relation to a boundary and to the way in which its enactment is affected by ever shifting patterns of behaviour in relation to the performers, the context, discourses of power and the occasion of the boundary. These are the diaspora spaces (Brah, 1996) in which ethnicity is negotiated.

Viewing the research process as performative could, however, suggest that it is being claimed that research cannot hope to seek to understand the 'real' and this is contrary to the stance of the present study. The notion of research as performance could also seem to be contradictory to the position of the current study in that the staging of plays usually seeks to curtail and contain any notion of multiple tellings and variations and attempts to construct a single, supposedly logical and coherent, account in the interests of control, causality and some notion of singular ways of understanding. In the case of the present study, the stance is that investigation of the 'actual' in the performances and practices in relation to ethnicity is intended to give insights into the nature and causal powers of ethnicity in the 'real'. The concern is to avoid what Maclure (2003, p.91) notes as 'the guidebook format, the panoramic perspective and the fixed vantage point' common in so much ethnographic research because this takes insufficient account of the complex relationship between the real, the

actual and the empirical. Another difficulty could be seen to be that there is often a conviction when considering performances that actors and those whose lives we touch upon in order to carry out research are 'making it up', 'not being themselves' but this assumes that there is only one self to be whilst the self that appears in the performances is one of many selves, the self or selves that appear in that particular context under those conditions. Other selves appear under other conditions but those other selves are also performances that emerge from the actual and give us ways of understanding the 'real'.

If one accepts the complex relationship between the real, the actual and the empirical, then one needs to go much further than has been common in exploring the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Trying to get closer to those we are researching may enable more perspectives to be considered but all too often it is taken for granted as meaning that there is more likelihood of the research performances being understood in the same way, when there is no reason to believe that this is so. Research performances need to be reconceptualised as involving roles being negotiated, assigned, contested and renegotiated. The possibility of multiple tellings needs to be recognised as the performances in the actual may be ever shifting, reflecting the activation of causal tendencies in particular contexts. The contention, therefore, is that research can no longer satisfy itself with a single unproblematic narrative. We all act out different beings in different situations with different others depending on how causal tendencies are activated in the actual and to seek to eliminate these 'performances' is to eradicate what there is to be known, to reduce the multiple to a false and restricting unity that leaves no place for the spaces in between that give us some sense of glimpsing the nodal points between apparently discontinuous performances. The context in which any piece of research is carried out can indeed be viewed as one or more performances but these need to be understood as faltering and

ungainly productions that bear witness to the dynamic and multi-directional relationship between the real, the actual and the empirical. The art of the researcher in this context is to conjure descriptions and analyses of the performances that are as authentic from as many perspectives as possible but this is not in order to seek one explanation but to recognise that there are many. The concern is to trouble and problematize certainties and to open up multiple readings and interpretations of surface performances and actions in order to better understand what might be significant and what might be beneath.

The sense that can be made in any research situation is, therefore, viewed as emerging from shifting performances which provide glimpses of something beneath and between them and evidence of underlying tendencies, in Bhaskar's (1998c) sense, representations of certain but not necessarily all elements of that research context. Whilst we can seek to research carefully, there is no claim that the same findings will emerge if someone else carries out the research or even if the same researcher carries it out again, because the surface features of any act of production are likely to represent some elements but not others in relation to what lies behind them and there may be other performances that are missing or do not occur during any piece of research. The research process is, therefore, to be understood as the endless search to capture what is present, what is absent and what is only glimpsed in the performance and to trace the splintering shoots of the rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) meanings and explanations on the surface, beneath, above, behind and between.

Ethnography

Bearing in mind the lack of previous research into young children's experiences of ethnic identity, an ethnographic approach was judged to be the most appropriate way of carrying out the study, providing

for an exploratory means of gathering the fine detail of every day life in the nursery; in Bhaskar's (1998c) terms, the effects that would provide the evidence of causal tendencies and the underpinning nature of ethnic identity. As Rock comments (2001), much ethnographic work is exploratory at the outset and precise research questions and theories are not identified initially but emerge from the detailed descriptions that have been gathered from work in the field. Such an approach finds support in the work of Corsaro and Molinari (2000) who argue that 'ethnography is an ideal methodparticularly when it aims to both document children's evolving membership in their culture (Lave and Wenger 1991) and when focused on key transition points in children's lives' (p.180). It remains the case, however, as Gordon et al (2001, p.188) comment that: 'Ethnographic research with very young children has been sparse, and the lives of children have often been interpreted from adult perspectives.' As James (1999) also notes, much ethnographic research with children has focused on how adults teach children the lessons of culture, rather than 'how those lessons are learned by children' (p.248). The challenge of the current study was to attempt to engage with children's understandings and experiences as well as those of others in the communities of practice in which they participate.

The term ethnography is often used to mean many different things. Atkinson et al (2001) indicate, however, that most approaches have in common the use of participant observation in order to seek to understand how people interpret the world and their experiences. They also tend to involve collecting very detailed descriptions of the field of study which are then used to generate theory. Whilst early anthropological ethnography was often missionary and colonial in character and, in the case of the studies of Eastern cultures, demonstrated how 'the stereotypes and structures of the orient were crucial to the Western fantasies of itself as the world of enlightenment, progress and evolutionary superiority' (Said, cited in Marcus, 2001, p.111) more recent approaches to ethnography have

come to recognise (though not always easily) the importance of an awareness of time, culture, society and politics in analysing the detailed descriptions. As Shaffir notes (1999), the generation of theory increasingly involves the researcher sharing his/her interpretation and theories with those studied and taking account of their views. There is also a concern with 'suspension of preconceptions' (Ball, 1993, p.32) and to 'make the familiar strange' (Gordon et al, 2001, p.188) in order that events are described in as much detail as possible and that significant elements are not overlooked through over-familiarity. Gordon et al (2001) point to this familiarity as a particular problem in educational settings because 'school is familiar for all of us' (p.188). As discussed earlier, these detailed descriptions are very important to the critical realist position adopted since they provide the empirical level of experienced events, which are then used to generate the actual level of all events whether experienced or not and evidence for the causal tendencies that underpin them (Houston, 2001). The ethnographic concern to record in detail is important to ensure that the theory that is generated is based on carefully recorded events.

It is important, at the same time, as Coffey argues (1999), not to see notions such as the familiar and the strange, knowing and not knowing and closeness and distance as in any way straightforward, particularly in adopting a critical approach to understanding the world where such binaries are seen as polarising and as promoting obfuscation. Once we move beyond the world as conceived in terms of binary opposites and 'one way streets' a space opens to understand strangeness and familiarity as shifting, ebbing and flowing in different situations that allow different forms of understanding to emerge. Thus the researcher is conceived of very much as situated in a world of

'heterogeneous discourses entering into conversations, noticing sites and images along the

way, gathering stories and available “collectibles” The researcher wanders about asking questions and reconstructs the answers as new stories to be told of his or her adventures. Post-modern knowledge ...is complicated, impure, messy, full of different kinds of “stuff” that the researcher collected and now must somehow handle – rather like life itself’ (Clarke, 2005, p.166).

This approach is fundamental to attempts to explore ethnic identities in the present study.

There has been much debate (see, for example, by Rengert, 1997, Gomm et al, 2000) regarding small scale ethnographic approaches and the extent to which the findings can be generalised. Whilst qualitative researchers (see, for example, Schofield, 1993) often suggest that conclusions can be drawn that go beyond the individual context, a significant concern in the present study was rather to explore and establish what was worth looking at in order to understand ethnic identity and so notions of generalizability and reliability were just not relevant. However, it is important to bear in mind Schofield's contention (1993) that, despite the small scale of much qualitative research, there are ways of increasing the generalizability of its findings. Whilst it is acknowledged that the descriptions and meanings are particular to the research setting, the implications of the research are clearly important in furthering and widening understanding of, in this case, notions of ethnic identity in nursery children and nursery settings. Bassey (1999) argues for the notion of ‘fuzzy generalisation’: that it is likely, possible or unlikely that something that has been observed in one case may be found in another. Hence thick description (Geertz, 1973) and comparison over time provide at least some basis for other early childhood researchers and educators to make comparisons, if they wish, and seek ‘resonances’ (Stapleton, 2003, p.33) across settings or identify

'tendencies' that point to causal structures (Bhaskar 1998c) that explain how ethnic identities are negotiated in the context of the nursery. The research will also provide opportunities for reflection, problematisation and dialogue rather than simply providing answers.

Ethnographic Analysis

Whilst it is maintained that the ethnographic approach has been highly appropriate to the aims of the study, it has also generated very large amounts of data. Bearing in mind the constraints of the thesis word limit, a data engagement strategy was required. It was decided, therefore, that data would be scrutinised in terms of its direct relevance to the stated aims and only this material was then included in the ethnography and made the subject of analysis.

Whilst there is a wealth of literature concerned with ethnographic approaches and a growing literature concerned with the collection of ethnographic data, as Lofland (1995), Snow et al (2003) and Nilsen (2005) note, there is relatively little literature concerned with ethnographic analysis. Snow et al (2003) make an important point when they argue that the 'analytic moment' (p. 184) is either ignored completely or treated as a 'black box' (p.184). Lofland (1995) and Wacquant (2002) draw attention to the relative paucity of literature concerned with analysis and Lofland suggests 'analytic ethnography' as a possible way forward. This model is not terribly helpful to the present study since it is premised on a positivist paradigm concerned with collecting 'facts' and exploring cause and effect in order to arrive at generic 'truths' that is held to be untenable. At the same time, Lofland (1995, p.54) does usefully draw attention to the way in which analysis can become 'over elaborated' and make little reference to the data collected or 'under elaborated' conceptually and overly descriptive. Wacquant (2002) criticises much ethnographic analysis for being too concerned with the immediate situation, ignoring broader issues and influences. He argues that such a position ignores his belief that:

'Every microcosm presupposes a macrocosm that assigns it its place and boundaries and implies a dense web of social relations beyond the local site; every synchronic slice of reality observed has built into it a double "sedimentation" of historical forces in the form of institutions and embodied agents' (p.1524).

There are echoes of Bhaskar's critical realist position (1998a) here and very significant parallels with the way in which the present study views communities of practice of ethnic identity as operating not merely at the micro level but as trajectory through to meso and macro level influences.

The most common approach to ethnographic analysis has tended to be based on the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967) with its emphasis on open-ended emergent analysis where theory is developed through a process of constant comparative analysis of theory with the data or with existing theories, which are then elaborated and reformulated by systematic comparison with new data. Emergent analysis has certainly been a feature of the present study. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 2nd edn) provide a step-by-step account of how analysis within the grounded theory method should begin with open-coding and with word-by-word and line-by-line microanalysis at the beginning of a study, in order to generate initial categories and to identify relationships between them. The next stage then focuses on asking sensitizing, theoretical, practical and structural and guiding questions and making theoretical comparisons. Theoretical comparisons are used where the initial analysis of a particular piece of data does not provide a clear category and so comparisons are made about how far the properties and dimensions of the data are similar to and different from known phenomena. This leads to the creation of new categories but also to axial coding where subcategories are linked with their main

categories. Once the major categories have been established and the relationships between them established, then grounded theory moves on to selective coding where the theory is integrated, refined and saturated until no new properties, dimensions or relationships emerge. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 2nd edn) also draw attention to the significance of the conditional/consequential matrix which seeks to make relationships between the micro and macro in understanding phenomena, which is important to the present study, linking conceptually with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979). It does not, however, go far enough in conceiving of Wenger's (1998) notion of trajectory through micro and macro communities of practice and pays insufficient attention to Foucault's account (1998, 2002) of the significance of power in individual lives.

The most useful analytical framework for the present study is considered to be Clarke's (2005) notion of 'situational analysis' where she explores a model of 'pushing grounded theory around the post-modern turn' (p.21). Clarke criticizes conventional grounded theory for not reflecting sufficiently on research processes, skating over differences and variation in a search for homogeneity, 'the normal' and coherence and for a concern with 'purity' of research method. She suggests that, in order to take account of the 'post-modern turn', as well as using the traditional methods of interview and observation in carrying out ethnography, attention needs to be paid to narrative, visual and historical elements of the situation to be researched. In terms of analysis, she argues that there needs to be a concern with the significance of discourses within narrative, visual and historical sites, in order that sufficient account is taken of the operation of power as meso and macro influences within the micro field to be studied (hence the concern with studying the administrative documentation and categories in terms of admission of children, the decoration of the homes and the nursery, the dress of adults and children).

Clarke (2005) proposes a model of analysis of ethnographic materials and narrative, visual and historical discourses based on the use of situational maps. These are intended to identify all the elements in the situation and examine the relationships between them, first in messy and then in ordered and relational forms. In parallel, she promotes the use of social worlds/arenas maps (which identify all the meso and macro level influences and their discourses in the social worlds and arenas and the boundary markers between them), and positional maps (which chart the different positions taken and the spaces and silences between them without reference to the identification of individual or collective voices). In this way, Clarke seeks to overcome some of the conceptual problems with the conditional matrix within traditional grounded theory, which situates meso and macro level influences as linked to but outside the micro situation rather than running through it.

There are dangers, however, that mapping may lead to formulaic analysis and to fixed positions being marked out. Clarke (2005) maintains that these are tendencies to be avoided and that the concern is not with singular readings or with purity but with representing the field of possibilities. In this regard, the model is considered useful to establishing the multiple and messy analyses that will be central to the present study but the mapping elements do carry these dangers, particularly in the case of positional maps, where Clarke conceives of positions as being mapped along axes. Whilst the axes are intended to help conceive of a continuum, the positions reflect polar opposites in ways which return to defining a binary which Clarke has argued against.

As within critical realism, Clarke argues that situations are 'rooted' in notions of the underlying world. Whilst Clarke uses the root metaphor, she actually draws attention, in the same way that Bhaskar (1998d) does, to the need for an analysis of the ways in which there may be multiple causes and effects that cannot be linked

together in any singular manner: 'There are no one-way arrows, but instead attempts to delineate processes of co-constitution through specifying conditions and relationalities' (p.298). In this sense, it may be more helpful to think not in terms of links back to roots but rather in terms of rhizomatic relationships, in the manner suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (2004). As Brown and Jones argue (2001):

'Rhizomes defy the regularity of linear growth. They do not have a central or main trunk. Nor do they emerge from a single root. Instead, with their underground stems and aerial roots, they upset all preconceptions Rather than travelling in one direction, the rhizome seeks multiple openings' (p.179).

Similarly, in the chapters that follow, drawing upon the multiple performances that emerge in the ethnography, the analysis will be one that explores the 'underground stems and aerial roots' in order to better understand the ways in which the children experience and perform their ethnic identities. Before doing so, the chapter that follows will provide details of the methods and procedures that were used to explore the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity amongst the nursery's children, parents and staff.

Chapter Four:

Methods and Procedures

This chapter will examine the context in which the research was carried out and the methods and procedures that were used to examine the experiences of ethnic identity amongst the children, families and staff. The chapter will begin with information about the research setting and will move on to examine the approach to fieldwork, ethical issues, field notes and construction of the auto-ethnography. Thus far the discussion of methodological positions has primarily been conducted in the third person but the engagement with practicalities of research and the use of auto-ethnography necessitate a move to the first person in order to acknowledge my part within the research.

Collection of Data

The study was focused on a nursery school in Lancashire where I was the head teacher for four years, leaving in 1997. This had the advantage that I knew many of the staff and the practices but the time lapse also meant that there was an element of distance and strangeness, key elements given, as Gordon et al note (2001), the ethnographic concern to make the 'familiar strange' (p.188).

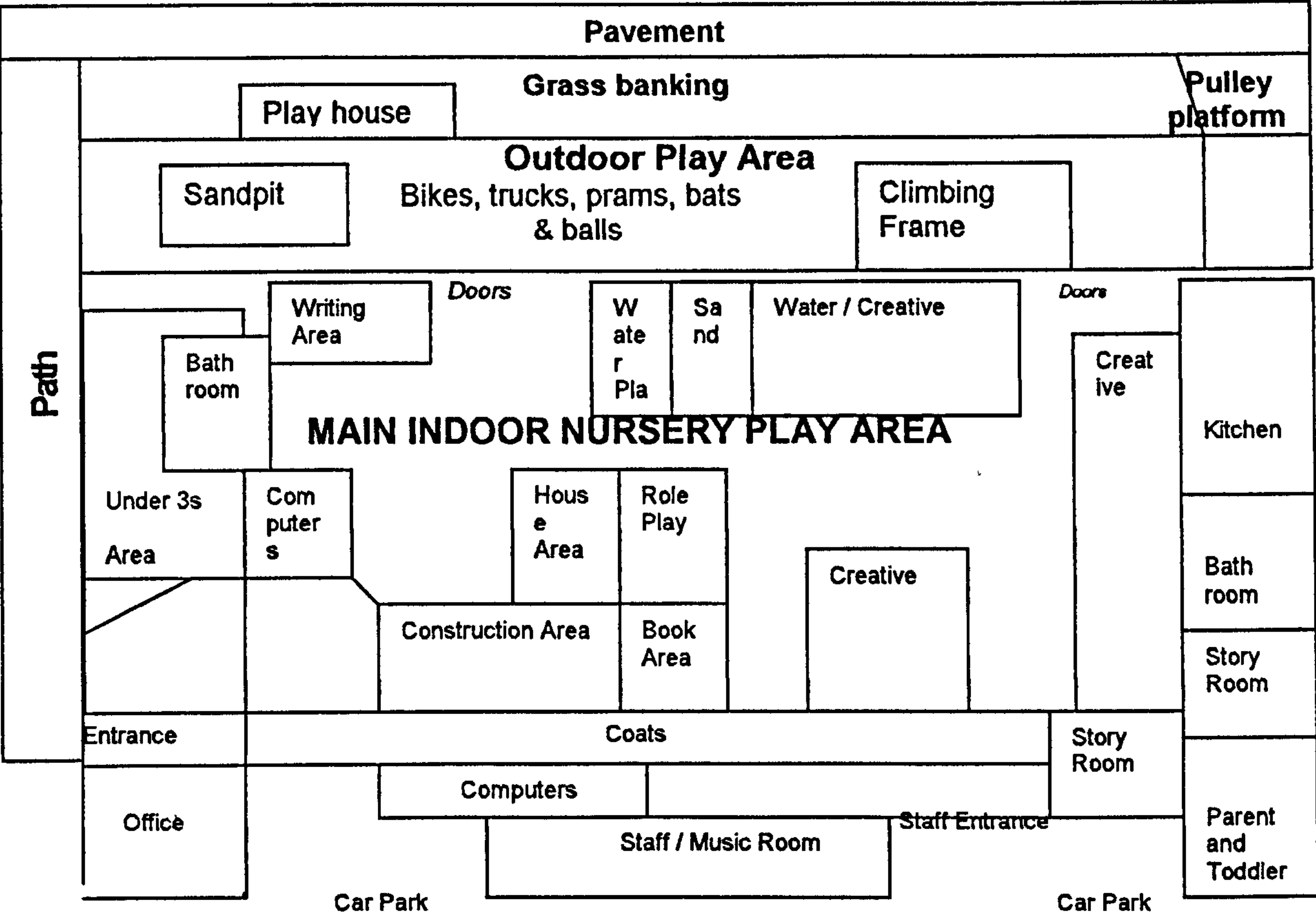
Community Context, Physical Environment and Staffing

The nursery itself was funded by the local authority and provides 55 morning and 55 afternoon places for children from the September following their third birthdays. Approximately eighty per cent of the intake was of Pakistani-heritage and twenty per cent of white-indigenous heritage. The nursery was staffed by a head teacher, two nursery teachers, three nursery nurses, two nursery nurses to support children with special educational needs, a part-time teacher

to support children with English as an additional language (all of whom were of white-indigenous heritage) and three part-time (two full-time equivalent) bilingual nursery nurses (of Pakistani-heritage). There was also a secretary and a caretaker (both of whom were of white-indigenous heritage). All staff were female except for the caretaker. The building also included care for children aged three to eight years before and after school and nursery provision for children aged two to three. This provision was staffed by two white nursery nurses and funded through Sure Start (state provision for children under four and their families perceived to be experiencing disadvantage) and through fees. Another part of the building was also funded by Sure Start and provided classes for parents and also a Parent and Toddler Club.

The nursery was located in an area that comprised small terraced houses when the nursery school was built in 1950 but which was redeveloped in the late 1980s. At this time, some of these houses were demolished and replaced with housing for the elderly, a small park area and some business units. A mosque had recently been opened in a building directly behind the nursery. At the end of the study, an extension to the nursery had been built on the small park area directly in front of the building and this now provided health visitor facilities, places for children from birth to three and wraparound care, training and parent facilities.

Figure 4.1
Diagram of Nursery Layout



Children Studied

Thirty-two children were observed in 2004–2005 and a further thirty-two in 2005–2006. In 2004-2005, they were drawn from one of the two nursery classes (where the teacher is referred to as L.P. and the nursery nurse as J.P). In 2005-2006, they were drawn from the other class, (where the teacher is referred to as S.H. and the nursery nurse as S.T.) in order to look at possible differences in the communities of practice in each. The children to be studied comprised half the morning and half the afternoon class in each case. The children were selected using two criteria. The first was gender: eight boys and eight girls were studied from each of the morning and afternoon groups. The second was ethnicity: from each session, four were of white-indigenous heritage and twelve of Pakistani–heritage, reflecting the overall present ethnic mix of the nursery. Hence, from each

session, two boys and two girls were of white-indigenous heritage and six boys and six girls were of Pakistani-heritage. The inclusion of both sexes enables some consideration of the interplay of gender and ethnicity in the construction of ethnic identity. The reasons for studying a different cohort each year were two fold. At a practical level, the first year of data collection formed the pilot study. At a more theoretical level, including material from both years was seen as important in providing an adequate description of the effects that provide evidence of the causal tendencies (Bhaskar, 1998c) that might explain the underpinning nature of ethnic identity as experienced in the children's homes and as they started nursery school. There are parallels here also with the work of Tripp (1985) where he argues that knowledge of similar or previous cases should be applied when seeking to understand a new case.

Fieldwork

The research began with visits to the children's homes alongside nursery staff before they started nursery. The homes of thirty-two children were visited in August 2004 and a further thirty-two in August 2005. This was intended to enable me to understand something of the children's homes and prior experiences before they started nursery. This was followed, two weeks later, by a week spent in the nursery in early September 2004 and 2005, observing the same children as they settled into the nursery and recording my findings as field notes. Two further days were spent in the nursery in late October 2004 and 2005 when parent conferences were being held. This gave me the opportunity to invite the parents to share their perceptions of their children as they started nursery and to discuss with them some of what I had noted. Further observations and interviews were carried out in November and December 2004 and 2005 when the nursery was celebrating Eid and Christmas. Observations of everyday nursery activities then followed in January, February, March, April and June 2006. Two days were spent in the

nursery in April 2006 when parent conferences were again being held. A day was spent accompanying the children on a trip to the seaside in May 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Evidence that emerged from the pilot study in 2004–2005 had suggested that expressions of ethnic identity were most evident at boundary markers (Wenger, 1998) such as Christmas and Eid and so further evidence was gathered at such times but it is important to recognise that the focus of this study was on exploring how ethnic identities express themselves and are experienced. Whilst ethnic identity may be most marked at points of difference, such as those occasioned by festivals and celebrations, the concern was also to explore whether there may be other, more subtle, boundary markers and so it was important that fieldwork was carried out that captured the day-to-day life of the nursery. Perhaps more importantly still, it was also important to explore the ways in which ethnic identity may be expressed at points where difference is not clearly present. In other words, there was a concern to explore lack of clear expression of ethnic difference because the concern needed to be to explore invisibility of ethnic identity as well as moments of the boundary marking performance of difference. In this way, it was hoped that further insights would be provided into what ethnic identity may mean and how it may be expressed, even as absence. For these reasons too, it remained important to study the children in the context of their everyday activities in the nursery as well as on special boundary occasions.

Table 4.1: Summary Table of Data Collection

Data	Data Type	Data Form
Overview of Observations and	○ Visits to the homes of thirty-two children in Summer 2004 alongside nursery staff (four boys and four	Written notes Documents

Interviews	<p>girls of white-indigenous heritage and twelve boys and twelve girls of Pakistani-heritage).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visits to the homes of thirty-two children in Summer 2005 alongside nursery staff (four boys and four girls of white-indigenous heritage and twelve boys and twelve girls of Pakistani-heritage) ○ A week spent observing in the nursery in early September 2004 and 2005 ○ Two further days spent observing in the nursery in late October 2004 and 2005 ○ Further observations and interviews in November and December 2004 and 2005 ○ Observations of everyday nursery activities in January, February, March, April and June 2006. ○ Two days observing and interviewing in April 2006. ○ A day accompanying the children on a trip to the seaside in May 2005, 	
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	2006 and 2007	
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nursery school building (layout, age, state of repair and location, including socio-economic situation) ○ Nursery school design, layout, equipment and decoration ○ Observations of children and staff during freely chosen activities, including: child–child interactions; staff–child interactions; staff–staff interactions ○ Observations during adult–initiated activities including: child–child interactions; staff–child interactions; staff–staff interactions 	<p>Drawings/diagrams</p> <p>Written notes</p> <p>Documents</p>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussions with each staff team during each visit to the nursery ○ Discussions with the bilingual staff during each visit to the nursery ○ Discussions with the head teacher during each visit to the nursery ○ Discussions with parents once their children had been attending for half a term ○ Discussions with parents during 	Written notes

	<p>their children's second term in nursery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Whole staff discussion (n=12)o Discussions with children as they engaged in the nursery activities	
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Ethical Issues

Issues of consent are never straightforward but all too often are presented as involving little more than signed consent forms. It could be said that the head teacher of the school concerned was given information about how the data was to be collected and used, discussed the research with staff and gave consent before the pilot stage of the study began. This is true but there are significant questions regarding the extent to which any of them really felt able to do anything other than agree, given my past relationship with the nursery. On the other hand, this very knowledge of each other made issues of trust less significant than they might have been otherwise. It must also be acknowledged that the very exploratory nature of the research meant, as Hammersley and Atkinson note (1995) that, at the outset, I only had relatively vague ideas about what the research would entail. In this sense, as in many others, issues of consent had to be continually renegotiated as the research took new turns and such renegotiation will be discussed later.

Similar information about the research was given to the parents of the children and consent was sought to attend the home visits and to observe the children. Given the potential sensitivity of issues surrounding ethnicity and that the study would also be concerned with matters such as religion, class and poverty, it was important, as Fine et al (2000) note, to give careful thought to how to explain the purposes and uses of the research and to how to present it once complete. It was difficult, however, to be certain how far the parents

really understood what was being asked of them, given both the difficulties of explaining research intentions and the challenges of communication with many of them, whether verbally or in writing, because of the differences in our first languages. On the other hand, I knew many of the parents from my time as the head teacher and, in the second year of data collection, several of the parents had also been involved during the previous year or were related to other families who had and this seemed to mean that a trust was again present that was helpful to notions of consent. This in many ways was more significant than the mere signing of consent forms.

The age of the children to be studied (three years) posed particular issues in a number of respects. As Corsaro and Molinari (2000, p.183) recognise 'the ethnographer's acceptance into the world of children is particularly difficult because of obvious differences between adults and children in terms of cognitive and communicative maturity, power and physical size'. Until very recently, as Aubrey et al (2000) note, it has been considered by many researchers to be unnecessary to seek young children's consent, generally because of a belief that they are incapable of understanding and of offering a reasoned opinion. Whilst more attention is now being given to issues of children's consent, genuinely informed consent is even more difficult than it is in the case of adults. In the present study, my approach was that, if I was studying individual children at close quarters, I sought their agreement each time and explained that I would be writing down what they were doing. This is not, however, to claim that there are any easy answers to questions of children's rights and consent. In the end, my main consideration had to be to satisfy myself that the children were not being harmed or exploited in the research.

This also involved, as James (1999), Nilsen (2005) and Belanger and Connelly (2007) note, seeking to use research methods that enabled the views of the children to be heard without intentionally or

accidentally 'othering' them in the process. The dangers of speaking for children, rather than allowing them a space to express their ethnic identity, arose doubly from the study being concerned with young children and from many of them being of Pakistani-heritage when I am male, adult and white, rather in the way that Cannella and Lincoln (2007) identify. It required a complex model of what it means to engage with children's voices. The decision to study children's play, actions, paintings, drawings and choice of friends was a means of giving them a thickness of 'voice' that was made up of more than their words. Pahl (2007, p. 187) took a similar approach and argues that, in this way, a 'complex web of meaning ... became embedded and could be given a provisional, interpretative context'. This was considered particularly important in terms of addressing the language challenges posed by the age of the children and the status of many of them as speakers of English as an additional language.

Very rarely did children show any concern about my presence in the nursery but there were a very small number of cases where this was the case. A girl of white-indigenous heritage was very anxious whenever I was in her vicinity and cast side ways glances at me and often ran off to other activities. I tried to maintain what I thought she considered a safe distance and, with time and familiarity, she did seem to become more accepting of my presence but I still felt that there was an abuse of power involved, however unintentional. A girl of Pakistani-heritage also became very agitated whenever she was aware that I was in the nursery. Initially, she had seemed to enjoy my presence in story times, smiling at me at regular intervals. With hindsight, perhaps this was actually indicative of anxiety and her smiles very quickly changed to tears. Normally a happy and confident child, according to the nursery staff, she immediately became tearful as soon as she realised that I was in the building. At Christmas, she was Mary in the school's nativity and I spent much of the time hiding from her but she spotted me towards the end of the performance and once again became very upset. The bilingual staff

tried to find out why I was upsetting her but she was unable to explain. Her main concern was just that I should not go to her story time. I had wanted to do so because many of the children that I had visited at home were in her story group but I felt that I had to respect her wishes.

On a small number of occasions, I found that the children sought to influence my work as a researcher in other ways. In particular, a boy of white-indigenous origin who was considered by staff to present challenging behaviour seemed to seek my attention at very regular intervals. As the children entered the nursery I would seek to make notes about what they did on arrival but Brian would come straight up to me and attempt to take my note pad and pen from me and say 'Put it there', wanting me to slap hands with him. Knowing that the staff would not approve of this, I did not feel that this was something I should encourage. On other occasions, as I sat in the construction area with my note pad next to me, he would pick it up and tell me that he was going to do some writing for me. On the one hand, I felt he should be able to do this but, on the other hand, I knew that the staff would see it as part of his challenging behaviour and that it should not be encouraged. There was also the nagging suspicion that they were making judgments about how I handled his behaviour and about whether I was being 'firm enough'.

At the point where the research was being used to prepare conference papers and possible publications, I also found myself having to think very carefully about how I portrayed the staff, parents and children in a much more public arena. Malin (2003) reports similar dilemmas in her research concerning three five-year-old children of Aborigine-heritage where she found a conflict between her responsibilities to a white teacher and to the children. She felt that the racism that she discovered was largely unintended and therefore she felt uneasy about portraying the teacher in a negative light but also that not to write about it would have meant that such

marginalisation of children of Aborigine-origin would have remained invisible for white teachers of young children. Malin notes that the problem was further exacerbated by the difficulties of maintaining anonymity in a small scale study and so she decided not to publish for several years. I found myself in a particularly difficult situation because some issues were emerging that could be viewed as critical of the staff and unflattering of the families and I did not want to be seen to exploit them whilst at the same time needing to be able to draw upon my research in order to fulfil my publication expectations as a research active member of staff in a university. Vanderstaay (2005, p.399) writes of a not unrelated dilemma in his ethnographic study of a teenage cocaine dealer where he was concerned about exploiting a vulnerable teenager and his mother but where he 'left the relationship with a dissertation, a Ph.D., and a job offer; they left the relationship jailed, drunk, and drug addicted'. As Murphy and Dingwall (2001, p.341) note 'publications from ethnographic fieldwork can, and do, cause hurt and offence to those studied'. There was also the further complication that publications needed to be developed *during* the research at a time when I was still collecting data and therefore there were matters to be considered in terms of on-going relationships in the field. Sikes (2006) refers to a growing trend for embargoes to be put in place for up to ten years on findings from professional doctorates and masters research because of concerns about upsetting those studied but also points to questions about the purposes of carrying out research if it does not add to human knowledge and influence practice. Vanderstaay (2005, p. 401) abandoned his research because of the guilt he felt but ten years later questions this decision since it 'did nothing to improve the education of students like Clay, to better our understanding of families like Serena's ... Nor did it help other ethnographers prepare for work in such settings'.

In order to help deal with these matters, as well as to try to take account of as many points of view as possible, I routinely discussed

what seemed significant aspects of my fieldwork with the staff in the nursery and sought their interpretation and shared my own. Thus the auto-ethnography that emerged sought to represent different points of view and multiple tellings. This is not to claim, however, that all problems are solved in this way. As Sikes (2006) argues, the interpretations and tellings that were discussed were only those of the moment and the views of the staff may have been different at a different time. Certainly my interpretation changed over time. That multiple tellings are opened up does not remove the issue, as Murphy and Dingwall (2001) note, that the multiple tellings are those of the ethnographer. It remains true that the auto-ethnography remains my understanding of what they said and my selective representation of it. By using auto-ethnography, I sought at least to make explicit that it was my interpretation and did not seek to establish an invisible authority. As Spencer advocates (2001, p. 450), I sought to 'recognise complexity and difference, rather than hide them beneath a veil of homogeneity and generalization' and I attempted to represent these differing view points in the written account but this is not the same as saying that I necessarily accepted their viewpoints and portrayed matters wholly as they saw them. As Murphy and Dingwall (2001, p.342) recognise this 'stance may be experienced as betrayal or rejection by participants who expect researchers to affirm or endorse their version'. This was a particular issue given that I know the staff so well and the best that I could hope to do was to ensure that they understood that I would necessarily 'reframe their versions' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.346).

Presence and Relationships in the Field

It is widely accepted (see, for example, Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Coffey, 1999) that relationships are a very significant part of ethnography. In the present study, consideration is needed of my relationships with the parents, their children and with the staff of the

nursery. In terms of the parents, the development of a relationship was complicated by the fact that I do not speak Punjabi whilst more than half of them were not fluent in English and that we did not share a common heritage. These were challenges also faced by Brooker, (2002b) in her ethnographic study of children of Bangladeshi-heritage. Deegan (2001) argues that this raises questions such as 'Can a stranger ever understand as insider or an 'alien' culture?' (p. 21). Abbas (2006) notes that lack of detailed knowledge concerning religion, culture and ethnicity may lead to the researcher being viewed as an intruder and significant thoughts not being shared by those being researched. He also comments, however, that there is always a mismatch of understanding even when people do share the same culture and Guevarra (2006, p.528) also points out that in her own ethnographic research that 'doing research in communities of individuals with whom researchers share a common racial or ethnic identity intensifies the nature of vulnerability, as field membership becomes conflated with notions of cultural loyalty and allegiance' and so neither outsider nor insider research into ethnic identity is without its challenges. However, whatever the disadvantages of my outsider status in relation to the parents, like Brooker (2002b, p.17) I found that 'my relationship with their children was the only token of good faith and good intentions they required'.

In terms of the children, there were issues perhaps in terms of my position on the margins. Again I did not share the same first language or skin colour with many of the children and did not live in the same town. I was concerned about how the children understood my comings and goings in the nursery and the possibility that some children could become close to me when they were settling into the nursery only to find that I was absent the following day. There was also the fact that, other than the caretaker, I was also the only man in the nursery and consideration was needed of how this might affect both the boys and the girls.

Then there were the relationships with the staff, where I was both an outsider and an insider, in varying degrees. Many of them had worked there ten years before but there were also new members of staff and so there was a need to try to renegotiate relationships and to consider impression management. Whilst previously I had been the head, I now had a new life as an academic, living in a neighbouring city, having left a town that I never liked. Since the staff knew of my dislike for the area, I worried about how they viewed my reasons for returning to the nursery, thinking that perhaps they thought I was seeking to criticise and make fun and, indeed, they would sometimes joke (or did they?) that I should 'go back to Manchester' if they did not agree with something I said. There was a relationship to be renegotiated with the head, who had previously been my deputy, and we were closer than I was to the other staff, a further issue in relation to gate keeping and relations in the field. Although I had generally got on well with the staff, I had been closer to some than others and was not certain that all had a positive view of me and so, here again, there were factors that needed to be considered as part of the research process. During the first year of data collection, the staff team that I focused on included a practitioner with whom I got on well and with whom I had worked particularly closely during my time as head teacher. I felt that she held me in high regard whilst viewing me as slightly eccentric and there was a particular need to monitor the possibilities of 'going native'. At the end of the first year of fieldwork, I moved on to focus on the other staff team where there was less familiarity at the outset.

As Hammersley and Atkinson note (1995), it is common for researchers to be viewed as 'expert or critic' (p.81) and this was certainly a strand that was to emerge within the present study. I would sit quietly in staff meetings and suddenly be asked whether they were 'doing anything wrong'. I also found that whilst I was trying to reserve judgment, this proved difficult because of how the staff viewed me. Whilst I saw myself, and explained myself to the staff, as

an ethnographic researcher seeking to describe but not interpret too soon in order to allow ideas to form, they saw me as the ex-head teacher and now university lecturer and authority on all matters related to young children. Consequently, they cast me in the role of expert and sought my views and opinions at every turn. They would ask for my 'verdict' if they had any concerns about the children and although I attempted to deflect the questions back to the members of staff and to cast them as expert in their own school and community, this tended to leave me feeling that I had let them down in some way. In short, my relationship with the nursery I was seeking to research led me to have to consider 'the connections between one's own biography and the communities one seeks to understand and represent' as Guevarra (2006, p.549) found in her ethnographic research but in ways other than sharing an ethnicity.

Field notes

This takes us further into the nature of the way in which ethnographic approaches go about collecting the information on which the research is based. As noted by Emerson et al (2001), there is very little agreement amongst ethnographers regarding how to go about recording what happens in the field. Whilst most agree that use is made of observation and field notes, there is little consensus about how these are undertaken. Some ethnographers make notes from the very beginning on the basis that by so doing they minimise the effect of note taking on those being observed. Emerson et al (2001, p.357) assert, however, that 'Making open jottings ... reminds those studied that the fieldworker, despite constant proximity and frequent expressions of empathy, has radically different ... commitments and priorities...'. Whilst this may be the case, the stance in the present study remains that any research is essentially a performance and a co-construction and a concern to seek to eliminate researcher effects by not taking notes seems to miss the point. It also seems an odd point for Emerson et al (2001) to make, bearing in mind that they also

comment that 'Field notes are a form of representation in reducing the welter and confusion of the social world to written words, field notes (re)constitute that world in preserved forms' (p.353) . All that one can do is to be aware of the effects that particular behaviours might have and to (de)construct those effects as part of the sense that is made of the situation.

As someone who knew the setting well, a major challenge was always to 'render the familiar strange' (Goodley et al, 2004, p.57). Field notes were written in a number of different ways. In part, this involved making notes about the layout of the nursery, the day's planned activities and the displays during the first part of the day as though they are completely new to me. As time passed, this often involved noting what had changed rather than writing everything down afresh. This led to some worries for me about what I had missed and about why I had or had not chosen to note down particular things. It is certainly true, as Emerson et al (2001, p.353) note, that: 'field notes are inevitably *selective*. The ethnographer writes about certain things that seem 'significant', ignoring and hence 'leaving out' other matters. In this sense, field notes never provide a complete record'. Other decisions that needed to be made concerned where and when to make notes. Where direct involvement in the action of the nursery was not possible or necessary, often because this would have interrupted the children's play for no good reason, notes were written at a distance and contemporaneously. Where I was directly involved in play sequences or interactions with the children, then I tended to make some notes as soon afterwards as possible. None of this was straightforward as the children would seek to include me or seek my attention in some situations but try to exclude me from others. Certainly, with a concern to study the every day experiences of the children, my concern was not to impose my will and priorities on the children, and so, whilst not seeking to deny the power that all adults exercise in relation to children, my inclusion or exclusion was generally on the

children's terms and, as Measor and Woods (1991) noted, 'children are capable of ...constructing a world in which the distinction between what grown ups can and cannot hear is important.' (p.67). On a small number of occasions, when I felt I had more sensitive notes that I wanted to make that involved questions about staff behaviour or thinking, I found myself retiring to the toilets in the manner described by Cahill (1985). Each evening, I then produced a fuller version of what I had noted during the day. Much of the time, the notes simply recorded the day's events chronologically but there were also some occasions where a series of observations completed at different times – often because I found myself drifting in and out of the children's and adults' activities – seemed to be more usefully written up as a continuous sequence, in the manner described by Emerson et al (2001), where one is aware of 'some known endpoint' (p.359). Whilst the approach did involve some element of constructing a 'story' or a fiction in the manner described by Charmaz (2006), the story constructed sought to retain whatever degree of fidelity is possible with the day's events. This processing of the field notes was very time consuming and had both advantages and disadvantages in terms of the on-going analysis that is part of ethnographic research. On the one hand, it meant that there was regular and progressive engagement with and reflection on the data but on the other hand the significant time involved, often late at night meant that there were challenges in terms of remaining analytical whilst also seeking to transcribe the notes, much in the way that Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) describe.

Auto-ethnography

All of this points to the importance of a process of auto-ethnography as the means by which possible effects, meanings and understandings were explored. Once it is accepted that there can be no privileged place for the omniscient view of the researcher, what emerges is the writer's need to interrogate his/her own subjectivity

(Goodley et al, 2004), the 'messy text' (Marcus, 1994, cited in Plummer, 2001) and '..an intense problematizing of the whole field' (Plummer, 2001, p.398). At the heart of this auto-ethnography is 'a strong reflexivity which recognises that the ethnographer and his or her language are inevitably a part of the phenomenon that is being investigated' with 'a responsibility to recognize complexity and difference' (Spencer, 2001, p.450).

The approach to auto-ethnography used in the present study is consistent with many aspects of auto-ethnography as outlined by Anderson (2006). I was involved as a member of the social world under study (though not a complete member) through my previous occupational appointment there as the head teacher, analytic reflexivity, narrative presence in the research and dialogue with others in the research field. This involved a commitment to sharing with the staff much of what I was observing and shifts in my thinking. The approach, however, has more in common with Anderson's notion (2006) of analytical auto-ethnography than with Ellis and Bochner's espousal (2006) of an evocative narrative approach because there is a commitment to analysis in order to understand broader social phenomena (much in the way that critical realism examines surface features for signs of effects that point to causal tendencies as possible ways of understanding the underlying social world). Ellis and Bochner (2006) challenge such a concern as privileging logic and abstraction over feeling, without recognising that these ways of understanding are themselves reflections of Enlightenment thinking. The present study, however, shares the concern of Burnier (2006) about the binaries and dichotomies between logic and emotion that are likely to emerge from Anderson's identification of opposing analytic and evocative approaches. In keeping with the approach of Vryan (2006), the present study does not deny the significance of emotion in seeking to analyse social phenomena and there are moments in the ethnography where the significance of feelings is highlighted in order for the reader to

understand and make 'connections' with my experience but this is done, not to deny the possibility of seeking to understand better the factors at work in the effects observed but to enable the reader to understand how 'effects' may have numerous causes, which may have a complex relationship to underpinning causal tendencies.

However, as Coffey (1999) notes, there is disagreement about the extent to which 'self-revelation and reflexivity' (p.18) should appear in the analysis and a belief that 'the boundaries between self-indulgence and reflexivity are fragile and blurred' (p.132) and often more personal insights appear only in the field notes and appendices. Atkinson (2006) criticises auto-ethnography for a concern with the world of the self when the world of others is far more interesting and important but such a view is not helpful to the present study. The concern is to engage with both self and other and this is consistent with the view of identity (both ethnic and researcher) as social practice and as Maclure (2003, p.156) notes '...the worlds of the ethnographer and subject start to seep into one another... the assurance that comes from knowing one's Self in contrast to the Other begins to unravel'. Part of the auto-ethnography is the researcher's need to engage with the unravelling in order to hold together something of the porous and leaking performance, rather as Denzin (2006) argues.

Constructing and Analysing the Ethnography

The fuller account then became the basis for construction of the ethnography, again involving processes of selection, filtering and refinement. As Van Maanen (1988, p.8) makes clear 'There is no direct correspondence between the world as experienced andas conveyed in a text'. Whilst this may be the case, it is also important to recognise, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, that this does not mean that the relationship between the two is arbitrary but there is a sense, perhaps, in which critical ethnography has 'a sort of

stammering relation to its object' (Lather, 2001, p.487). The construction of the ethnography involved decisions about presentation and style of writing to use because, as Van Maanen (1988, p.25) notes: 'Ethnographies are written with particular audiences in mind and reflect the presumptions carried by authors regarding the attitudes, expectations, and backgrounds of their intended readers' (doctoral examiners, fellow academics and those interested in young children). He argues that ethnographies are generally realist, confessional or impressionist in type and whilst I do not seek to construct an unproblematic realist tale (and would ask questions about whose realism would be involved), I certainly feel that the confessional and the impressionist are part of the narratives. It is also important to be mindful of Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995, p. 241) contention that lack of attention to such matters 'is an abdication of control over one's material'. It might also be argued that it would also involve neglect of one's ontological and epistemological positions.

In the present study, with its commitment to a critical realist view of reality, this means that there can be no place for a single uncomplicated narrative because the epistemological position is one where the actual and the empirical are contested and are only indications of the reality that lies beyond. In the chapters that follow, the auto-ethnography becomes the vehicle for troubling certainties and for opening up multiple tellings and interpretations of surface performances and actions in order to better understand what might be significant in understanding children's experiences of ethnic identity.

Chapter Five:

Presentation and analysis of findings

As discussed in the Methodology Chapter, Clarke's (2005) notion of 'situational analysis' has been considered helpful in the present study. It provides a model of analysis that reflects on research processes, recognises the fine grains of difference and diversity, and engages with debates about what is considered 'the normal' and 'the abnormal'. There is a concern with the incoherent as well as the coherent and with moving beyond the 'purity' of research method in order to reflect the messiness of carrying out research. Following Clarke (2005), the initial analysis sought to identify all the sections of the ethnography that were judged to make a contribution to the pursuit of the research aims. All the elements in these sections were examined and the relationships between them sought, first in messy and then in more systematic forms. The situations and relationships were examined in terms of the operation of meso and macro level influences and their associated discourses and the boundary markers between the different influences were also explored. The different positions, practices, actions, influences, spaces and silences were then charted in order to seek to understand the influences at work in terms of how the children, their families and the nursery experienced, represented and marked ethnic identity.

The analysis moves beyond the multiple possibilities of a post-modern view of reality in order to argue for a critical realist stance. Following Bhaskar (1998d), situations are seen as 'rooted' in notions of the underlying world but the relationship between this underlying world and the surface situations and practices is not one of linearity. Hence, there may be causes with no practices and effects played out or only played out under certain conditions and there may be practices whose relationship to underlying causes is splintered and multiple. In other words, the analysis seeks to explore children's, parents' and practitioners' practices and micro, meso and macro

level influences on them in relation to ethnic identity in the home and the nursery in order to seek to understand what these might tell us about the underlying nature of ethnic identity. In so doing, it seeks to recognise that 'research results are always warped versions of the shifting and complex original, originals that are never static' (Cannella and Lincoln, 2007, p.321).

The findings and analysis will be presented in three main sections, which are closely related to the initial aims. The analysis also seeks to address the closely associated questions that were raised in the Literature Review: what is the relationship between agency, power and constraint within the communities of practice of home and nursery; and what is the relative significance of shifting and fluidity in understanding young children's ethnic identity in comparison to fixings in terms of skin colour, religion, heritage and cultural practices. The first section deals with home and family in order to address the concern to explore 'the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity' and 'the part played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity'. The second section considers the nursery environment, activities and practices in order to examine 'the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity' and 'the part that a particular nursery, the adults there and other children play in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity'. The third section reflects upon performances of ethnic identity during special occasions and celebrations in order to 'explore how the children view their own ethnicity and that of others through their activities and language'.

Home and Family: Exploring the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity and the part played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity

The home visits were intended to shed light on the environment of the home as the locus of practices and performances in relation to

ethnic (and other) identities in order to address the concern to explore 'the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity' and 'the part played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity'. A particular concern was to study possible outward markers of ethnic identity, such as house decoration and furnishing, language and dress so as to consider how they might shape the children's understandings, experiences and identities prior to starting nursery. Whilst such observation may be considered voyeuristic, like Pahl (2004, p.341), I felt that it was necessary because such attention to 'artifacts on walls and behind glass cabinets, as well as drawings, talk and other communicative practices carried symbolic meaning .. and operated as emblems of identity'.

Family, home, community and ethnic identity

(The full ethnography may be found in Appendix 1, p.169)

Amongst the families of Pakistani-heritage, three main decorative styles emerged that appeared to have a complex relationship with the affluence and degree of religiosity of the families. Whilst it is difficult to be certain about the affluence of the families, estimates were based on parental occupation (which was discussed during the visits), house decoration and maintenance, the presence or absence of a wide range of electrical products and the clothes worn by children and parents. The more affluent the families seemed, the more they had adopted Western styles of decoration. Generally signs of religion were not strongly marked in the homes of these families but this was not universally the case. In the example that follows, religion was not an obvious marker of ethnicity initially but emerged as more significant over the year:

We have some difficulty finding the entrance to ... a very imposing house. The garden is well tended and the house is very well maintained with ... leaded windows.

When they spot me, Sa'dan's mother goes ... and gets a veil. We are shown in through a modern kitchen where there are three women and an eleven month old (Sa'dan's cousin) ... Another older woman comes in.

We are shown into ... a sitting area with a three seater sofa and two chairs. The floors are all laminate and the walls are white ... there is a Persian-style rug and some Persian-style large cushions. The television is tuned to a Sky channel showing a Bollywood film. There is a DVD and video player, some DVDs and some videos ... There are also plants around the room – which is unusual – and dried flowers.

(See Appendix 1, p.171)

In this case, whilst the decorative style has strong Western influences, there was also evidence of the influence of religion in the mother's concern to ensure that she was wearing the hijab or veil. This mother also wore the burkha (a loose full length gown covering the face, head and body) when bringing Sa'dan to and collecting him from nursery. Sa'dan was very hesitant when he first started nursery and appeared unhappy for much of the year. He played with a group of boys of Pakistani-heritage but frequently was found in disputes with them and was aggressive towards other children.

The following is more typical of the more affluent homes, where religion did not seem to be such a strong external marker of identity:

There is a small well tended front garden. We are shown into a hallway ... and then into the sitting room There are green two and three seater sofas. In a corner of the room there are a computer, desk, chair and book cases with papers. There is also a huge TV with surround-sound in front of the window. A clock and paper weight are the only signs of non-Western culture....Mum speaks English with a non-regional accent and works at a local

college. Dad is a software manager in a nearby larger town. Zahir speaks English at home but understands his grandparents when they speak Punjabi – though he answers in English ... mum says he has recently been to London ..., which he had really enjoyed, and that he likes jigsaws, cars, play dough and the computer ... he has no particular book favourites but ... goes to the library every couple of weeks. SH mentions some children of Pakistani-heritage who will be starting nursery but mum says that he is friendly with one of the children of white-indigenous heritage. Zahir was quiet but responded to ... ST as she shared a jigsaw with him. He completed the most complex of the nursery jigsaws with ease.

(See Appendix 1, p.170)

Zahir settled readily in the nursery and had friends both of Pakistani-heritage and of white-indigenous heritage. He played with a range of materials from the beginning, though particularly cars and small construction equipment.

About half of the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, fell into another recognisable style where there appeared to be more immediate influence from Islam and from non-Western culture. In these homes, there were bench-style sofas with lids with storage space inside, clocks with Arabic writing, mosque ornaments, framed pictures of Mecca and extracts from the Qu'ran. The following is an example:

...We go through the hall way to the front room which has a beige carpet and cream leather sofas, a fan, a coffee table very close to a sofa and folding chairs. The fireplace has lots of trophies, especially for volley ball. These are from all over Europe ... Dad works at a sweet centre and there is a huge stack of card printed in Arabic / Urdu and some made up into boxes ... There are also huge stacks of Coke, Lilt, Fanta, Sprite. There are plastic flowers in baskets and large pictures of the mosque in Mecca and extracts from the Qu'ran. There are three Qu'rans on their sides on a corner shelf high up by

door. There is a tall wooden lamp of rectangular cube shape, which has pictures of waterfalls on the sides ... the interview is conducted almost entirely in Punjabi, which causes feelings of helplessness and lack of understanding for me... The women say that no English is spoken at home.

(See Appendix 1, pp.172-173)

This home, like a number of others, begins to suggest something of the complex cultural spaces in which many families live. The cousins who live here started nursery together. They settled in readily but spent most of their time playing together. They spoke to each other in Punjabi, including during story times when they appeared to want to speak to each other more than they wanted to listen or respond to the story. This begins to suggest the ways in which language operates to include children in some communities of practice but to exclude them from others, thereby creating a sense of boundary and difference that marks out what it means to belong to one ethnic group rather than another in that particular situation.

In another home:

...conversation is difficult because of a radio receiver on the wall with prayers being relayed from the mosque in ... town. ... A large clock is surrounded by numerous unframed extracts from the Qu'ran ... The clock ... is decorated with Arabic writing but then plays 'There's no place like home'. ... The mother does not speak English. Father speaks some but Isra is crying in another room and he goes to her – without saying anything. An older sister is translating but her understanding is poor. ... The parents do not work outside the home and both wear salwar kameez ... JP explains about bilingual support and tries to go to see Isra but she doesn't want to talk to her. Later Isra waves from a window as we leave.

(See Appendix 1, p.174)

Isra subsequently found it difficult to settle into nursery. She was upset when she was left by her parents and remained on the fringes for a long time before she felt confident to join in the activities. This again might suggest that, for Isra, ethnicity, gender and social class intersected to deny her knowledge of language and resources and although a legitimate participant in the community of practice of the nursery, she was unable to move towards full participation.

In another case:

We arrive to find three children playing outside. ... granddad is ... eating fish and sausage in batter. A younger man ... shows us in to the house. He is dressed in light blue salwar kemise. The family own a takeaway called Dial a Pizza and he says he is a chef and driverAiza is in lime green dress and is wearing lots of bangles. She is very engrossed by the sticklebricks that she has been brought to play with and gets very angry when a younger boy tries to take some. She hits him very hard indeed. Haseen is in western clothes (with a Timberland top) as is a younger sibling. ... At intervals, another woman and another man appear on the other side of the glass French doors that have a sofa across them. Children bang on the glass at each other. Father says Aiza speaks a little ... English but mostly Punjabi and thinks she will need support with English. ... They say Aiza and Haseen will try anything and are good at talking. ... In Punjabi, Aiza says she wants to come to nursery where the toys are. (See Appendix 1, pp.174-175)

On starting nursery, Aiza settled readily but Haseen was much slower to join in with the activities. Where relatives started nursery at the same time, there was a tendency for the girls to look after the boys and this was also discussed by some of the mothers in the staff–parent conferences, as we will see later, but this was not possible in this case because they did not attend the same session.

The final quarter of the homes appeared to be the least affluent and showed the greatest influence from Islam. These homes often had large unframed extracts from the Qu'ran attached directly to the walls.

The paint is flaking from the outside of the house and the curtains are dirty. Two windows are broken and are boarded up. The window frames appear rotten. ... When we go inside the carpets are thread bare. The wall paper is old and is peeling in places. We are shown into the front room. ... There is unframed script from the Qu'ran on the walls. There are pictures of mosques in frames displayed at angles on wall and there is a model of mosque in a cabinet. There are other Arabic / Islamic symbols. ... There is a clock on the wall, decorated around the edge with Arabic script.

(See Appendix 1, pp.173-174)

Subsequently, Hamza was slow to settle in to nursery and struggled to understand what was happening during group activities such as story and singing times.

There were a small number of homes that did not fit the categories identified above but which had similarities between them. Some had few clear signs of Islam, some had many more; some appeared financially disadvantaged, others appeared affluent; but they had in common many signs of non-Western approaches to family life:

We visit the homes of three cousins who live in six terraced houses in the same street. We have been told that we just need to go to a house in the middle of the street where we will find all of the families. ... We are shown into a room with bench type settees arranged in rows. ... There is nothing in the room except for these settees and a table. ... Walls have been knocked down between some of the houses but the six houses are not all next to each other and the families say they are trying to buy the intervening ones.

(See Appendix 1, pp.175-176)

In this case, the three cousins relied very much on each other when they started nursery and spent almost all of their time playing together. The girl tended to lead the play and to look after the two boys:

One afternoon, Ibrahim arrived in a white salwar kameez and waistcoat in black, red and gold. He clung to his cousin and stood next to her yawning as she played in the shop.

(See Appendix 5, p.231)

This was something that their parents later talked about when they attended the staff – parent conferences.

This pattern of cousins spending a great deal of time together was also evident following a visit to another family where several families were leading heavily interconnected lives:

.... Several families live together in at least two houses that have been knocked together. The staff ... were told on the last visit that the women do not leave the house.

We go in the door of one house but we are then shown through a door way space to another house and ... into a back room. My appearance appears to surprise them but no comment is made. Unusually, however, one of the men stays to answer the questions. ... There are two floral bench style sofas, a dresser full of china, a coffee table and two smaller tables with plastic covers on. The wall paper is a patterned white. There is a heavily patterned carpet with a gas fire in a marble fire place. There are two medium and one small vases of plastic flowers. ... There are nine hangings with extracts from the Qu'ran and pictures of Mecca in gold frames – some are at angles on the wall and have nails underneath to make them hang like this. On a small table there is ... a prayer stool with handles on

either side. There are ornate ceiling light fitting with lots of bulbs at angles and what look like wind chimes to make up the shade.'

(See Appendix 1, pp.176-177)

When the children started nursery, they settled relatively easily but spent most of their time playing together and were less confident if one of them was absent. This tendency to seek out family indicates the significance of family and cultural communities of practice and illustrates the importance of boundary markers and how bumping against an alternative community of practice shapes participation. It also points to the way that Blaka and Filstad (2007) argue that informal learning is at least as important as formal learning when entering a new community of practice, particularly when the formal practices of that community are not well understood.

Two-thirds of the families of white–indigenous heritage appeared to be living in challenging financial and social circumstances. They tended to live close to the nursery and in local authority housing:

... We enter the house directly into the living room. It has a laminate floor and pale leather sofas which are not terribly clean ... an older brother ... says to me 'I have four bedrooms and a TV me' and he repeats this later on. The living room also has cable TV but ... very few other signs of possessions. Mum is asked if they have a computer at home and replies 'no - but I'm going to get one'. ... When we say we are leaving, mum is texting and appears not to notice...

(See Appendix 1, pp.178-179)

In another case:

As we enter the house, there is a strong smell of bleach. The mother says she has been cleaning up ready for our visit. The child is sitting watching Sky TV. The sofas and carpets are threadbare. Half of the living room has been vacuumed and there is furniture polish left out.

The rest of the room has not been cleaned. We are shown through into a rear room that contains a table, chairs, an old washing machine, gym equipment, a lawnmower, a Christmas tree, a fishing rod, a rocking horse, a tractor and a dresser with clothes and bedding spilling out of it. The floor is covered in food droppings
(See Appendix 1, p.179)

In a final example:

We enter the terraced house directly off the street ... the mother and her friends are in the kitchen whilst three children under four are in the front room. There is a baby gate between the rooms. The television is turned on. The house seems not to have been decorated recently and the furniture is old but reasonably clean. ... The youngest child is in a play pen where there are no toys and he is standing up, trying to see the TV. His complexion is very pale and his nappy clearly needs changing. Mum comments that he is so good that they forget about him.'
(See Appendix 1, pp.177-178)

With these families, what I noticed most was the lack of cleanliness, rather than signs of what might mark white-indigenous life, pointing to the way in which whiteness tends to be invisible to white researchers except where there are signs that mark out some aspects as 'other'. The lack of cleanliness was generally most evident in that some of the homes had not been cleaned or had only been cleaned in preparation for our visit but there were also a small number of homes where the children and their clothes appeared dirty. These children were hesitant when they first started nursery, tending to be rather isolated and to step back and observe in much the same way as children of Pakistani-heritage. They did, however, seek contact with the staff and often asked for stories to be read to them on an individual basis. They lacked knowledge of some of the conventions

and practices of the nursery but, by the end of the first term, they had become much more confident:

Bradley ... sought S.H. to have a story. ... Bradley arrived in the painting area and started to paint directly on to the easel. S.H. asked him what he has forgotten but he didn't know. He wrote his own name on his picture using a mock cursive script.

(See Appendix 3, p.209)

The final third of the families of white-indigenous heritage appeared not to be experiencing deprivation and outward markers of their identity appeared to concern greater affluence:

We approach a semi-detached house with a ... front garden that the mother is working in. ... They have been away and she is 'getting it back to what it was'. ... They decide we should talk in the front room where there are two and three seater black leather sofas. There is a coffee table and a fire place with fireguard and a largish video camera on top. The walls are pale with a deeper colour on the chimney breast. There is a large TV, a DVD and a video. ... Mum is a part - time teaching assistant in the next town, dad is a media lecturer at a local further education college.

(See Appendix 1, pp.180-181)

Eliza settled into the nursery quickly, making friends with both boys and girls of white-indigenous heritage. She played in most of the different areas, completing a range of activities. She sought adult company and talked readily and confidently to adults about what she was doing. In short, she appeared to have the cultural capital to engage readily in the practices of the nursery and did not stand out as 'other' but as one of them, illustrating the invisibility of affinity and fitting in.

For only one family of white-indigenous heritage did religion appear significant as a marker of identity. The family lived in the next town

and their home had new furniture, numerous bibles on the shelves, crosses on the doors and a t-shirt with the message 'Jesus Loves Me', hanging up to dry. Mitchell appeared to settle easily into the nursery, taking part in the activities and talking confidently with adults:

Mitchell went to the painting easel. ... He got a pencil to write his name on the picture but said he couldn't remember how to do it. I said I couldn't either and he said he might be able to do the first three letters. ... He told S.H. he was painting a tree with a leaf falling off. He said he was going to paint a blue squirrel and laughed. His paint started to run and this upset him. S.H. showed him how to wipe his brush.

(See Appendix 3, p.209)

He did not readily make friends with other children, however, and his parents reported that he:

is not always terribly happy ... he says that the children say he is a prat! This is something that the staff have not heard the children say to him but it is true that he does not appear to have any real friends... – though the mother of Pakistani-heritage said that her son thought he was his friend. His parents comment that, outside of nursery, all his friends are much older.

(See Appendix 2, p.185)

In many ways, Mitchell did stand out as different from the other children, largely because of a maturity that he displayed in relationships and conversations with adults.

Another element that appeared important to note during the visits was the way in which the children and adults were dressed. In the homes of the families of white-indigenous heritage, all of the mothers wore casual clothes such as jeans and t-shirts. In almost all the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, the mothers were dressed in

traditional salwar kameez (the *kameez* is a long tunic worn over the salwar which are loose fitting, pyjama-like trousers). However, in the least affluent homes, the mothers often spoke little English and tended to wear the most modest clothes. When bringing their children to the nursery, the wearing of the jilbab or burkha (variations on a loose full length gown covering the face, head and body) increased over the period of the study. The reasons for this are not clear but they may be related to changing Muslim attitudes following recent world events. The more affluent mothers appeared to have clothes in richer fabrics and spoke better English. A very small number wore trousers and long sleeved tops, using Western scarves as hijabs. The children of white-indigenous origin wore unremarkable Western clothes. The clothes worn by boys of Pakistani-heritage were usually Western in style except in the poorer homes where some dressed in salwar kameez and sometimes wore jewellery. In many of the homes, the girls were traditionally dressed in salwar kameez and often wore bangles. In summary, it seemed as though greater affluence may have been one of the causal tendencies that created greater fluidity of identity and moved many of the families away from more traditional forms of dress and began to change how ethnic identity was practised and expressed. It must be recognised, however, in relation to the critical realist stance of the analysis, that causes and effects cannot be linked together in any singular manner. It could equally be, for example, that such families had already adopted more Western styles of dress and that in so doing they were granted access to more affluence.

The visits led me to question my ability to view the homes other than from a white, British, middle-class, male, educated perspective. My feelings of experiencing the 'exotic' in the homes of some of the families of Pakistani-heritage troubled me, as did my struggle to remember to note down what was not 'other', what was not different from my own experience, whether with families of Pakistani or white-indigenous heritage. This meant that the practices of the few white

professional families seemed almost invisible to me whilst those of the less affluent were striking and led to concerns about whether the research was voyeuristic. These feelings made me question the authenticity of much of what I was recording because, as points of significance began to suggest themselves, I found that I was not comfortable in most of the homes, exploring social, cultural and religious worlds that I did not completely understand and felt that I may not be representing accurately. It was not simply a case of being unfamiliar with the homes of people of Pakistani-heritage: the poverty experienced by many of the white families was just as unfamiliar and made me feel equally uncomfortable. This raised ethical issues in terms of how to represent the families in the study and in publications because the families could be harmed by the process. As in the case of Malin (2003), discussed in the Methods and Procedures Chapter, I came to feel that understanding the circumstances of some of the families and how they mapped on to the practices of this particular nursery's version of early childhood education appeared important if some children and families are not continually to be marginalised by practices that do not match well with their previous experiences. In short, despite the dilemmas, I felt that even if the representation was not completely accurate, nothing would ever be learnt about the practices of minority groups without being brave enough to attempt at least to represent them.

The inter-relationship of socio-economic circumstances, culture, heritage and religion in understanding expressions of ethnic identity in homes and families

Ethnic origin and degree of affluence (often considered as a mark of social class) thus emerged as significant factors in understanding the influences at work in shaping identities. In many homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, religion was also significant but rarely so for families of white-indigenous origin. Whilst studies of social class have traditionally emphasised occupation and income as markers of

class divisions, social class is a strongly contested notion. The majority of mothers of Pakistani-heritage did not work outside the home (though a small number were students and one a college lecturer), whilst the fathers generally worked in small family businesses, as taxi or delivery drivers, takeaway chefs or in clothing firms (again a small number were students and one a college lecturer). The small number of white fathers in the main worked in unskilled manual jobs, whilst the mothers generally had part-time employment in local shops or did not work outside the home. Vincent and Ball (2006) suggest that family lifestyle, values, political preferences, locality and education may be more helpful than occupation in understanding divisions between and within classes. Reay (2005) argues that what is needed is greater understanding of the connections between the internal affective worlds of individuals and external social structures, processes and markers. Access to such worlds was difficult to achieve, particularly bearing in mind the challenges posed by the majority of parents not speaking English as their first language and me not speaking Punjabi. Following Sayer (2005), Vincent and Ball (2006) argue for the significance of feelings such as guilt, shame, resentment and defensiveness in setting the boundaries between class positions and Reay (2005, p.913) argues that there are other emotions at work such as 'envy, deference, contempt, arrogance, pride, rage, satisfaction, embarrassment and pity'. These feelings also appear important in understanding the relationship between ethnicity, class and religion, as we will see below. Recent work such as that by Archer and Francis (2006) has sought to explore the relationship between class and race in studying the achievement of British Chinese children and has examined how racialised cultural, economic and social capital influence the reproduction of class identities. These factors seem relevant in understanding children's experiences of starting nursery, as we shall see later.

The strongest signs of religion as a marker of ethnic identity were in the least affluent homes of families of Pakistani-heritage. Religion might be seen both to ensure legitimate participation (Wenger, 1998) in a Muslim community of practice and to be a source of pride and cohesiveness but could also be seen as being a source of defensiveness which excluded the same people from full participation in the community of practice of the dominant culture. Several interpretations are possible, pointing again to the complex relationship between the empirical and causal tendencies in critical realist analysis and it could be argued that the strong commitment to existing customs, culture and religion merely reflects the ways in which limited opportunities were available to the families in the community in which they found themselves. There was also perhaps, however, some sense of Hundeide's notion (2003) of being a member of a counter-cultural organisation, particularly given world events which had led to suspicion of Islam, marked out by expressive style and deep commitment markers, emotional intensity and strict internal discipline as a way of life. As well as the micro level community of practice, it could be that the families' strong cultural and religious identities need to be understood in terms of the macro and of a trajectory that links them via a constellation of community practices to other Islamic communities. Resistance and countercultural behaviours are only part of the ways in which ethnic and cultural identities need to be understood, however, because the families seemed to find themselves living amongst several communities of practice, which could be seen to place different demands on them as a result of the different cultures from which they had emerged. In one of the homes, a clock with Arabic inscriptions that played 'There's no place like home' could be interpreted as a symbol of the diaspora spaces in which these families live. It also has a certain irony when the notion of 'home' and 'homeland' appears to be concerned with more than one location and with the places in between (Bhabha, 1994).

Notions of homeland also came to the fore when the nursery was required to collect information for the first time about the ethnicity of the families. Difficulties had arisen in relation to the options relating to origins in Pakistan. On the advice of the staff of Pakistani-heritage, it had been agreed that the choices should be: 'Mirpur Pakistani' (thought to be the largest local group), 'Kashmir Pakistani' and 'Other Pakistani'. During the visits to the families, however, virtually all of the families described themselves as 'Other Pakistani'. Whilst this could be seen to point to a lack of knowledge on the part of the staff, and possibly to differences in origin between the staff of Pakistani-heritage and the families that attended the nursery (and this may explain some of the views that the bilingual staff held about the parents, of which more later), questions were raised about the families as well as the staff. Many of the families appeared embarrassed (a sentiment also identified by Robinson and Diaz, 2006) when asked which part of Pakistan they were from, or seemed not to know. The few who gave clear answers insisted that most of the local community was from Gujarat Pakistan and were offended that this ethnic grouping had not been listed. They were also the most traditional families, living in extended families, consistent with Hundeide's (2003) notion of communities of practice operating as counter-cultural organisations in the face of marginalisation.

Greater affluence in the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, as witnessed by dress and house decoration, seemed to lead to a decline in the presence and significance of external markers of religion in defining ethnic identity. Equally, it could be argued, for example, families who placed less emphasis on outward signs of Islam, had become more affluent. This might suggest, for example, that adopting more Western styles of decoration and clothing was a way of 'positioning' themselves (and being positioned) in order to seek entry into some elements of the practices of the middle-class Western community, perhaps in order to achieve greater status. How far this affluence might lead to greater status in the dominant

society and benefit their children in terms of educational attainment, however, is a different matter. In very few homes of families of Pakistani-heritage did the parents indicate any aspirations or expectations for their children's nursery education and this was commented upon by staff. Brooker (2002b), Skeggs (2004) and Archer and Francis (2006) argue that economic capital may remain twinned with forms of social and cultural capital that are not seen as valuable and worthwhile by those who hold power, leading to difficulties in being accepted and valued by the dominant culture and to lack of access to dominant educational communities of practice.

In the case of the white families, markers of ethnic identity were difficult to discern, reflecting the unremarked upon and almost invisible nature of whiteness in Western society (see, for example, Dyer, 1997; Mazzei, 2003; Ahmed, 2004). As a white, male, middle-class researcher, this invisibility came of not being 'other'. White-indigenous ethnic identity may be considered to be invisible in that it is often treated as the 'norm' and much research focuses only on ethnic identity in relation to how other ethnic groups deviate from it. This, in part, may be seen to reflect a history of white domination in ways of understanding the world but it might be argued that this reflects a notion of ethnic identity becoming important only in relation to being a minority group in a society when there is recognition of differences in relation to cultural practices. The focus of the present study, however, is to understand what it means to be of white-indigenous heritage in that context as well as what it means to be of Pakistani-heritage and so the concern is to examine the practices which are valued in that culture and the child's participation in them in order to understand the emergence of ethnicity in the dominant culture. Ethnic identity is viewed as comparative only in contexts where an alternative ethnicity to those around leads to experiences of difference. This, it is argued, is why ethnic identity is to be understood as being negotiated at boundary moments of difference rather than in terms of kinship and similarity: ethnic identity as

marked by similarity alone would not be marked because there would be no reason to mark it.

Consistent with the above, the most visible marker of white identity was where it coincided with poverty and became visible because it was different from my experience, illustrating the powerful intersection of ethnicity and class. Markers of ethnic identity were, however, implicit in the noting of socio-economic circumstances and lack of religious markers in most of the homes. With one exception, religion was not an obvious factor in determining identity. Several of the families were living in homes with shabby decoration and furniture and struggled with cleanliness, though one mother was keen to demonstrate an awareness, through cleaning in preparation for the visit, that this was something that we would be concerned about, pointing to the ways in which Foucault (2002) suggests educational institutions are instruments of surveillance. Only in a very small number of wealthier white homes did parents ask any questions about what their children would be doing at nursery. Once the children of these families started nursery, the majority of them settled quickly, joining in with a variety of experiences and activities. It seemed as though both the parents and the children demonstrated knowledge that gave them a shared identity with the staff and which would allow them access to the community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) or cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 2nd edn) surrounding early childhood education.

Parents, home, school and identity: the interaction of language, religion, gender, family and ethnic identity

(The full ethnography may be found in Appendix 2, p.185)

Staff–parent conferences provided further opportunities to understand home and community influences on children's emerging ethnic identity. Once during the Autumn Term and once during the Spring Term, parents were formally invited into the nursery to discuss

their children's progress. For those of Pakistani-heritage, discussion about language use and friendships is what dominated their meetings with staff. One of their main concerns was the extent to which their children were learning English and they appeared happy that they were using English at home much more since starting nursery. This might be seen to reflect the way in which Bourdieu (1993) argues that linguistic capital operates to allow individuals and groups to exercise social power. Accessing linguistic capital may be understood by parents as significant in terms of social power and educational success. The staff frequently referred to the way in which the maintenance of the children's first language was important to their sense of identity and to the development of more complex concepts (demonstrating awareness of studies such as those by Cummins, 1991) but the majority of parents commented that the mother-tongue had to be spoken with grandparents and its maintenance was seen as a concern of the home. However, as Robinson and Diaz (2006, p.111) argue, 'unless the home languages ... are authorised and legitimated in early childhood settings, the linguistic habitus generated speaking the home language ... will be replaced by English, and the habitus of speaking English may override children's interest and proficiency in using their home language ... with their family and community'.

Questions could be asked about the extent to which the children knew which language they were speaking and how deliberate the language choices were that they made. Early in their time in nursery, there were some occasions when a very small number of children from the most traditional and generally the least affluent homes spoke to English-speaking staff, and occasionally children, in Punjabi without appearing to recognise that they would not be able to understand each other. Overall, however, the children appeared to understand very well the language that staff and children were likely to use. There was a growing trend over the course of each year for the children to speak to each other in English, even where they

seemed to be more fluent in Punjabi and to answer questions in English even when asked in Punjabi. This might suggest a sense in which ethnic identity as marked by language begins to become more hybrid once there is regular contact with the dominant culture, though other possible reasons will be explored later. This echoes the way in which Robinson and Diaz (2006, p.109) argue that 'the relationship between language shift and cultural shift is of great significance'. Alongside this shift from the minority language and culture to those of the majority is a sense of uneasy fixing in relation to the older members of the Pakistani-heritage community.

Parents also reported an increase in swearing in both English and Punjabi and this seems to suggest that the children are concerned to position themselves (Davies and Harre, 1999) and to create their own particular communities of practice and diaspora spaces (Brah, 1996) in which parents are thought not to understand English and staff are thought not to understand Punjabi. Given that the children generally demonstrated a great deal of understanding of who spoke which languages, in selecting to use Punjabi, for the most part the children seemed to be consciously creating a language barrier which excluded those who did not share the same first language, rather in the way that Measor and Woods (1991) suggest that children can choose to exclude adults from entry into their worlds.

One mother also pointed to the ways in which children's languages and identities are bound up with complex understandings. Whilst her daughter was very hesitant at nursery and was only just beginning to speak and to join in the activities after she has been attending for two terms, the mother said that she spoke confidently at home: in Punjabi to her father who speaks little English and in English to her mother for whom this was the language in which she was most competent. This points to the partial nature of research and the complex nature of people who are constructed by the relationships, environment and tasks in which they are engaged, pointing to the real significance of

the social in constructing identity. Questions are raised about why Simah took so long to join in the nursery activities: was the environment alien to her and so she needed a long time to observe before joining in as Rogoff (2003) would suggest? This is an important consideration in exploring 'the part that a particular nursery, the adults there and other children play in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity'. The nursery environment could be seen to lead to only very peripheral participation for some children or it could be argued that the observation is a prelude to, or perhaps constitutes, peripheral participation. If it is a prelude then there are implications in terms of how the staff might support (or otherwise) children in their observations. It could also be that life was so complex at home that further diaspora at nursery took some time to negotiate and this is important in seeking to understand the part played 'by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity'. It points to the ways in which children could be considered to live amongst several communities of practice which have differential influences upon the ways in which children perform and experience their ethnic identities in different situations.

Discussions were also frequently concerned with friendships, sometimes with family arrangements and occasionally with issues related to religion. Many parents expressed interest and concern regarding the extent to which their children were making friends. Friendship groups were almost always single sex and rarely crossed ethnic groups. One of the teachers talked also of class divisions within her story group, which was entirely made up of children of Pakistani-heritage, with the more affluent children being discouraged by their parents from talking to the less affluent children. Nonetheless, a number of parents referred to their children as talking about friendships with white children when, in fact, very few children of Pakistani-heritage were friendly with white children. This raises questions, perhaps, about how 'friendly' is understood. It might be

that merely being side by side was viewed by the children as being friendly, rather like the early stages of 'we-ness' described by Nilsen (2005) but questions remain about the reasons why white friends were seen as desirable. Observations did appear to demonstrate a great deal of resistance when children attempted to talk to those from other ethnic groups, probably reflecting lack of fluency in each other's languages but also perhaps some other boundaries:

Three white boys played alongside each other and talked to each other in the construction area. One of the white boys kept asking a boy of Pakistani-heritage to come to his factory but got no response. They were joined by two boys of Pakistani-heritage who initially did not speak to each other or to anybody else but who then started to talk in Punjabi to the first boy of Pakistani-heritage but not to the white boy ...

(See Appendix 5, p.237)

Where children from different ethnic groups did interact and play together, this was not always easily achieved. The boys in the above example were then joined by a girl of Pakistani-heritage. As noted previously, it was rare for boys and girls to play together and so both gender and ethnicity appear to be important aspects in the negotiation of relationships:

A girl of Pakistani-heritage appeared and said 'Hello Jack'.

(She was ignored.)

'Hello Jack'.

(She was ignored again)

'I said hello Jack'

... 'I'm not Jack'

... *'Well who are you then?'*

... *'I'm Luke'*

'Well Luke – there's a train coming - it's raining, it's pouring, the old man is boring.

(See Appendix 5, p.238)

It is perhaps significant that the girl in this example, despite the mistake over the boy's name, has acquired and demonstrates considerable linguistic knowledge but still has to be able to negotiate gender and ethnic differences (and these may play out differently on different occasions) in order to interact with a boy of white-indigenous heritage. As in the above example, where there were friendships and interaction between white children and children of other ethnic groups, these required language competence and usually involved children from minority ethnic groups who were not of Pakistani-heritage, children of mixed heritage or children of Pakistani-heritage whose parents had separated. This could be interpreted as a community of practice in relation to ethnic identity being created on the basis of a particular background, which also excludes those not from that grouping who then have to join together because there are not enough of them to form a group alone. In the majority of cases, these families were some of the more affluent. This might suggest that friendships emerged between children who were minority groups of different sorts. The children of white-indigenous heritage with friends from other ethnic groups tended to be ones from more affluent homes. They may be seen as another minority group, one where ethnicity seems less important than outlook, values and beliefs and a connection with social class seems significant here, in the way that Vincent and Ball (2006) suggest. Perhaps what is significant is the way in which these children and parents occupied a class position marked out by attitudes and beliefs that separated them from

the majority of children and families who attended the nursery. These parents seemed very comfortable with their children having friends from other cultural and ethnic groups, though perhaps, much as Vincent and Ball (2006) found, it was still the case that the friendships were between 'people like us'. In keeping with this finding, whilst these parents did talk to each other at the beginning and end of nursery sessions, there were few, if any, interactions between other parents of white-indigenous and Pakistani-heritage.

A minority of parents both of Pakistani-heritage and of white-indigenous heritage made reference to religion in discussing their children. These differences in the extent to which the two groups of parents did so is suggestive of the way in which, in British society, the line between public space and religion is generally very firmly drawn but, in Islamic families, religion is frequently the framework for both public and private life. Only one parent of a child of white-indigenous heritage referred to religion but saw this as a significant part of his son's way of looking at the world. He talked about a plane crash that his son, Mitchell, had seen on television and how he came to find him to tell him how sad it was as he was cooking. The father talked about how he told Mitchell that he needed to go back to the kitchen but Mitchell had said, 'no come on, let's pray'. It is interesting to note, however, that whilst Mitchell appeared to settle well and was seen positively by the staff, he had few friends and his parents reported him to be unhappy at nursery. He demonstrated religious capital as a Christian that corresponded well with the beliefs of many of the staff but the nursery environment was one where the white children did not have religion as a key part of their lives and identities. In a sense, it could be argued, religion served to mark Mitchell out as 'other' because his Christian beliefs were not strongly evident amongst the other children and families of white-indigenous origin. At nursery, as we will see later, Mitchell demonstrated that he knew about the practices of the families of Pakistani-heritage in celebrating Eid but also that his family did not 'because we're not

dark are we?’ and that was how he understood his own identity as different from that of some of the other children (see Appendix 5, p.210). When reference was made by staff to celebration of Eid or to fasting during Ramadan, a few Muslim parents were interested in what their children said but there was a strong sense of awkwardness, perhaps reflecting a belief that religious observance was seen as a matter for the home or a belief that Muslim practices would serve to marginalise children and families from the concerns and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 2nd edn) of those with power and influence in society. It could also be that because the parents understood the often firm division between public and private in relation to religion in dominant sections of British society, they recognised their own practices as different and something to feel embarrassment or shame over. They may then have seen the public nature of religion as distancing their children further from the cultural capital that underpins educational success because they may come to be marginalised by an education system that disapproves of the public nature of their religion.

Another strand that emerged in relation to identity during the meetings was the way in which identity interacts with family and cultural arrangements. There were many signs of fixity, of seeking to maintain cultural practices and of nostalgia for tradition. In one case, the views of a teacher (L.P.) about what my study meant by identity also led to a mismatch between cultural understandings. The teacher explained that she had been doing a lot of work on family relationships because some of the children of Pakistani-heritage were very mixed up about and confused brothers and sisters with cousins, older brothers and sisters with aunts and uncles and parents with aunts and uncles and grandparents. In the case of a single mother of Pakistani-heritage, she was unhappy and concerned that her child would be left feeling isolated and without a proper family network of relationships because ‘we cannot be a family with just two and the others matter’ (see Appendix 2, p.184). The teacher said

that she understood that extended families were important but that the child must understand how she was related to them properly because this was a key part of her identity. The parent's concern that the wider family should be recognised appeared not to be solely about a different view of family relationships but to be much more about being in a very untypical situation in that community of being a single parent with an only child. The teacher's apparent concern to 'teach' the children about identity in response to the focus of my study is just the sort of situation that Murphy and Dingwall (2001, p.344) comment on when they note that 'participants ... have substantial capacity for exerting power over ethnographers'. It also points to the way in which, despite the distributed nature of identity, in the West, family identity has become narrower over time but how, for many families of Pakistani-heritage, identity is still dispersed over the whole family. Thus, it becomes impossible to separate ethnic identity from family identity.

There were, however, some cases where there was a clear concern about traditional family networks and ways of doing things. One mother of white-indigenous heritage was concerned to bring her daughter up how she was brought up, remembering childhood trips to the park, blackberry picking and conker collecting (see Appendix 2, p.185). Recognition of these cultural practices as similar to the researcher's own was probably enhanced by the boundary of time and nostalgia for traditions that are rapidly disappearing. Such feelings were also evident when a father of Pakistani-heritage claimed that, as a result of the demise of the South-Asian extended family and the growth of the Western-style nuclear family, much knowledge about childcare had been lost because it was distributed across a wide set of relatives (see Appendix 2, pp.185-186). There was also a group of three mothers, one with a daughter and two with sons, whose families all lived and came for their interview together and who were determined to hold on to traditional practices (see Appendix 2, pp.187-189). The teacher talked with them about the

way that the girl ran round after the boys, getting their coats for them, for example. The teacher highlighted the importance of the boys becoming more independent and of the girl seeing a role for herself that was not just about running after the boys. The younger mothers laughed but said that they mollycoddled the boys at home and encouraged the girl to do so too. It appeared that there was a difference between the cultural expectations of the teacher in relation to gender roles and those of the parents. It also seemed as though this contrast was strongest in relation to the views of the oldest mother who might be seen as having the most culturally traditional views. The juxtaposition of gender and ethnicity again shows how they can never be separated in attempts to understand the emergence of ethnicity. It should not be assumed, however, that this is to claim that all mothers of Pakistani-heritage held such traditional views. Another mother, one who was less traditional in her dress and who spoke good English, talked about the way that her son was very helpful at home, where he looked after his younger sixteen month old sisters and carried them up and down stairs (see Appendix 2, pp. 188-189). Seeing a boy in a caring role was viewed in a positive light by the member of staff concerned who shared and promoted such values but it also raised questions about whether there were cultural differences in views of risk and of childrearing practices or whether the mother simply has not thought of the dangers. All of this points again to the powerful intersection of ethnicity with culture, gender, family and individual differences.

All of these instances indicate the ways in which different aspects of children's identities are more or less important in different situations and to the ways in which children move between different communities of practice. There is a sense that the parents of Pakistani-heritage see language and culture as significant aspects of identity but they appear to have different views regarding the desirability of cultural and language shift. Many of the parents of Pakistani-heritage seem to see shift and hybridity as being important

in order to be able to access power and accumulate educational capital. In the interviews, the parents indicated that their older children generally spoke to the younger children in English once they had started nursery and appeared to accept this though some commented that the children needed to speak to grandparents and sometimes other family members in their mother tongue. This means that hybrid language use is common for many of the children at home as well as at nursery and could be seen as posing complex identity issues for children as they experience shifting expectations of them as they move between different identities in different settings. One girl seemed to demonstrate considerable skill in understanding the need to speak English to her mother at home and Punjabi to her father but she did not speak to anyone in nursery for two terms in either language and joined in with very few of the activities, perhaps suggesting the ways in which language-use and ethnic identity were further complicated for her once she had entered another environment where languages and experiences needed to be negotiated. Cultural and educational capital is not seen as universally desirable by all however, and this seemed to lead to a concern to retain and reinforce traditions for some. Even where parents do seek educational capital and participation for their children, this is not to say that they will be granted and in a context where children experienced the lack of power and influence that accompanies their ages, they are not always able to participate in existing communities of practice and so sought to create new ones.

The Nursery Environment, Activities and Practices: Examining the role of the nursery, the staff and other children in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity

(The full ethnography may be found in Appendix 3, p.193 and Appendix 5, p.225)

On beginning their nursery education, the environment appeared to operate for the children as a marker of the boundary between home

and school and it led to a range of reactions. The children all faced significant differences in the scale and size of the open-plan nursery when compared with the relatively small, predominantly terraced homes that most of them lived in. The environment they entered, in which all members of staff were female, was also not typical of the experiences of the majority of the children at home. During the period of the fieldwork, the nursery was redecorated in complementary shades of lilac and green, with matching display boards, perhaps reinforcing the feminised and Western environment that the children experienced. The types of activities on offer (such as painting, drawing, collage, construction, role play, sand and water) may have been reasonably familiar from home for the wealthier white children but probably less so for the others. Amongst the less affluent families, there was little evidence of these sorts of activities but, during a home visit to a more affluent home, Eliza's father said she 'likes running in circles, picking pea pods, climbing, paints, gluing and sticking ...drawing reading' (see Appendix 1, p.181). It could be argued that the nursery was one that reflected a white, female, middle-class notion of what a suitable environment for young children should look like and contain, much in the way noted by Fleer (2003) and Robinson and Diaz (2006). The poorest Muslim homes contained large extracts of text from the Qu'ran but the white homes had relatively little print. In the nursery, this meant that the children of Pakistani-heritage experienced a great deal less text in comparison with their homes and what little there was did not reflect the more familiar Arabic and Urdu. The white children, by contrast, encountered a great deal more text at nursery than at home.

These contrasts in familiarity seemed to result in differences in how readily the children settled in to nursery. Whilst most children of white-indigenous heritage engaged readily with the nursery's experiences, a minority of children of Pakistani-heritage stood at the margins, in the manner described by Blaka and Filstad (2007) in relation to newcomers in a community of practice. Most of these

children eventually joined in but a few only began to engage in the nursery's activities after almost a year. The majority of these children, as we saw from the discussion in relation to the home visits, were from families and homes with the strongest influences from Islam and from non-Western culture but they also included children such as Simah from homes where the hybridity of identity was most marked, with the necessity of complex crossing between different languages in speaking to parents and grandparents.

Consistent with the claims of Barth (1966, 1969, 1989, 2000), ethnic identity seemed to be most marked when there was least understanding of the conventions, practices and language and therefore the strongest sense of a boundary. This meant that the majority of the children were unable to access the intended offer of legitimate peripheral participation and the practices of the nursery served to marginalise them: mere presence did not mean that participation could occur. In terms of nursery practice, this points to the importance of nursery staff as brokers, in Wenger's sense (1998), in helping children to negotiate the boundaries. However, the bilingual staff, who were best equipped to help in these negotiations, was also those with least power in the nursery. They inhabited shifting identity spaces themselves, as we shall see, sometimes identifying with the families of Pakistani-heritage but on other occasions seeking to distance themselves and to view such families as 'other'. As might be predicted, the children who spoke least English and who were most hesitant at home were the ones who were upset when they arrived at nursery. Whilst they did seek contact with the staff, they were often reluctant to play with any of the equipment or materials, appearing not to know how to engage with the environment in which they found themselves.

Many of the nursery's communities of practice depended on language but significant ones, such as story sessions, were often conducted with no bilingual support and children of Pakistani-

heritage frequently seemed to be marginalised. There were also some instances where the children of Pakistani-heritage did not join in with shared aspects of the story, such as counting, when they were able to do so. Often, when asked to join in as part of a group, they did not do so but when asked individually they contributed. This could point to them experiencing story time as a place where they were not generally offered the opportunity to participate and so, when their participation was legitimised they were not prepared for this or felt resistance or disidentification. It could also be that their previous experiences had not prepared them well for group requests to participate and that participation had always been asked of them individually.

On other, less frequent, occasions, bilingual stories were told and here there were signs of the white-indigenous children losing interest and experiencing a degree of alienation. Often, children who normally listened and enjoyed stories became disruptive and talked to each other, pointing to the ways in which participation is strongly associated with language competence. Lack of language competence can thus lead to a lack of participation that could ultimately result in marginalisation and perceptions of children as badly behaved. Thus the same children would demonstrate very different schooled identities according to the circumstances under which stories were being told. Concerns were expressed by bilingual and non-bilingual staff about story times where both English and Punjabi-speaking children experienced disruption to the story because of the need to switch languages and so opportunities were created for stories entirely in English and entirely in Punjabi. There was less awareness, however, of the ways in which language, cultural and educational practices served to marginalise children of Pakistani-heritage on other occasions.

Even where language was not a barrier, there were a number of occasions where experiences appeared culturally specific and were

not well understood by the children. During story times, many of the children of Pakistani-heritage initially referred to the members of staff as 'teacher' but were told 'not teacher – call me Mrs..'. Fler (2006) draws attention to similar corrections in her research with minority groups in Australia and refers to the ways in which early childhood educators see the use of individual names of people and staff as important whilst the community valued the identification of relationships, pointing to fossilized behaviours leading to a lack of understanding on both sides.

It was evident that meanings are not entirely language constructs as many post-structuralists (such as Derrida, 2002) would maintain and depend on other outward manifestations and the complexity of senses that construct human experience. An activity that the children were expected to engage in early in their time at nursery was hand painting but, even when explained in Punjabi, this was an experience that seemed very unfamiliar and which some of the children of Pakistani-heritage resisted (see Appendix 3, p.200). Play with sand, particularly outdoors, was another activity that, whilst popular with some of the children, was resisted by others (see Appendix 3, pp.198-199). Such children were then seen as being deficient in some way without it being recognised that the practice was based on a particular model of early childhood education and the concern was to find ways of making them participate. In these situations, the bilingual staff could be seen as having a key brokering role at the boundary moments. Certainly they played an important linguistic role in terms of helping the children to understand the activities. Their shifting insider/outsider position in relation to the white middle-class practices of early years education and their ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage meant, however, that whilst a key brokering role might have been to help the children avoid alienation in the first place by suggesting more culturally understandable activities, this was not realised.

This points to the way in which it is being argued that ethnic, gender, class and other identities are experienced, negotiated, constructed, performed, renegotiated and reconstructed in particular contexts which are critically important as places where ethnic identities are examined. Bodily, rather than verbal, resistance to hand painting and sand play suggests the way in which the body may also be a site of performances in relation to ethnicity, as Skattebol (2006) argues. In this case, it seems as though the previous experiences of some of the children of Pakistani-heritage had not involved hand painting or sand play: in Vygotskian terms (1978), they had not experienced the activity inter-psychologically and so they had not had the preparation for the intra-psychological experience of participation in the activity. Hand painting and outdoor play in the sand pit are concerned with experimentation and getting dirty and with success in an activity where fine motor control is not necessary and these are cultural meanings which may not have been available to or understood by the children. Thus their experience and participation is likely to be different in kind from that of the children of white-indigenous heritage who have previously had such experiences. It was also the case that parents of Pakistani-heritage were far more likely than parents of white-indigenous children to tell their children not to take part in dirty activities such as these. They did so in Punjabi but this information was shared with the rest of the team by the bilingual staff. The bilingual staff were again placed as peripheral brokers, part inside and part outside the dominant discourses of early childhood education, and often reported the comment whilst laughing, suggesting their difficult position. All of this again points to the way in which difference becomes the significant factor in the exploration of the emergence of ethnicity. It could be argued further that, since the children who did not participate would have been aware that some did so readily, they would again be marked out as different. Equally, it could be argued that children of white-indigenous heritage experienced their own ethnic identity more explicitly than they would have in an all-white nursery through being aware of some of the

children of Pakistani–heritage not being able to participate in the same way. There are signs here, contrary to the charges made against Lave and Wenger (1991) by critics such as Bergvall (1999), Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson (2004), Fuller et al (2005) and Yandell and Turvey (2007), of the way in which peers can learn from each other as well as from old-timers within communities of practice because learning is inter-relational and mutually transformative.

In terms of other play experiences, the home corner was reasonably typical of the homes of most of the children, with many items and labels from local shops and supermarkets. The kitchen equipment was drawn from a number of different cultures and so at least some of it would have been familiar to the children. Early in the year, the dolls and dressing up clothes were almost all representative of white-indigenous culture but, as the staff became clearer about the focus of my research, they realised that they had very few dolls and dressing up clothes to represent other ethnic and cultural origins and some were bought and added to the home corner later in the year.

The role play area was often less representative of the prior experiences of the majority of the children. Early in the spring term, it was set up as a travel agent, with brochures of skiing holidays, which would have been familiar to only a very small number of (more affluent white-indigenous) children. Later in the spring term, it became a greengrocer's shop. Some of the children of white-indigenous heritage understood some of the language and conventions required of greengrocers' shops. The white son of one of the minority of professional families was one of very few who understood the rules and conventions needed. A child from a similar family, Josh, was also clear about greengrocer shop practices but these were not well understood by the others, however, as we see in the following extract:

Jamie Can I have some milk?

Josh ... I haven't got no milk (checking trolley drawers)

Jamie They haven't got milk and they haven't got DVDs at that shop

(Kelvin comes in)

Kelvin Say how much is it

(Myra comes in)

Kelvin Excuse me – what would you like to buy?

Melanie I'd like some carrots and toast – I don't need to buy all them things

Kelvin You want toast? – there's no toast here!

Adnaan (Goes behind counter and helps himself)

Josh Give ME that bag – you've got to buy it!

(See Appendix 5, p.228-229)

On many similar occasions, children of Pakistani-heritage came to the shop and watched but had none of the language or skills to be able to join in or sought to do so by taking foods without asking for them, as we saw above, thereby upsetting the white-indigenous children and members of staff. In so doing they became 'othered' as not knowing what to do or how to behave in the way that Robinson and Diaz (2006) note. This is not to argue that the children of Pakistani-heritage do not go shopping but that they lacked the ability to engage in the language practices required in relation to shopping and so behaved in ways that were considered inappropriate by the

staff and by the children of white-indigenous origin. In other words, the lack of language skills meant that participation became disruption and began to mark out the children negatively as 'other' in contrast to those few more affluent white-indigenous children who were seen to participate more appropriately in the nursery's community of play practices. This is a particular concern because of the danger of the children then being stereotyped as disruptive on the basis of their language skills, heritage and racial background.

In terms of friendship groupings, observations of the children seemed to indicate that gender, ethnicity and language formed particular communities of practice and further evidence of fixities of gender and ethnic identity as the children played largely in same sex, same race groupings. These fixings appeared to be based on the kinship that Verkuyten (2005) maintains emerges from culture, race, gender, language and common life experiences. The activities that seemed to lead to greatest interaction between ethnic groups were the sand pit and the construction area, the home corner and role play areas and the climbing area. In these areas, and in line with traditional psychological theories regarding the role of maturity in social development (such as those of Parten, 1932), the children played alongside each other early in the year but there was more co-operation as the year progressed. Account needs also to be taken, perhaps, of the significance of language as a barrier to participation and co-operation, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) and Robinson and Diaz (2006) argue. There were, however, gender differences in who played in which area too and there was a strong suggestion of gender-stereotyping in terms of the activities that the children seemed to choose: many more boys than girls played in the sandpit and construction areas; more girls than boys played in the home corner; whilst both boys and girls seemed to play in equal numbers in the climbing area.

There were also differences in the amount of interaction that occurred that seemed to point to gender and ethnicity operating in articulation with each other. The white children were more likely to interact with each other than those of Pakistani-heritage and girls of Pakistani-heritage were more likely to interact than boys of Pakistani-heritage. As well as maturity, gender and ethnicity seemed to play an important part in interactive and co-operative behaviours. Where boys of Pakistani-heritage interacted, it usually concerned disputes over equipment and materials, which were generally conducted in English even where the children were both Punjabi-speakers and did not have great fluency. The use of English in disputes may reflect the children's awareness that in order to ensure that the English-speaking adults could help them to solve their problems, then it was important to use a language that they could understand in order to enter one of the dominant communities of practice. Boys of Pakistani-heritage were far more likely than girls of Pakistani-heritage or boys or girls of white-indigenous heritage to seek adult attention in such disputes. Given that some of the mothers of Pakistani-heritage talked about 'molly coddling' their sons in the staff-parent conferences, there is a suggestion that the cultural protection experienced by boys of Pakistani-heritage may be seen to serve to differentiate them from girls of Pakistani-heritage and both boys and girls of white-indigenous origin in terms of their ability to co-operate, interact and solve disputes.

It could also be that the use of English in disputes was a sign of the children developing linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1993) in order to enable them to access the dominant culture and it was also a skill that became more complex over time. Just as Simah's mother talked of her daughter switching between Punjabi and English to meet the differing needs of her parents so there were other examples of such sophistication. On one occasion, three girls of Pakistani-heritage were playing together in the home corner bedroom with dolls and dressing up clothes (see Appendix 5, p.238). They appeared to be

acting out a gendered scenario from home and two of the girls had to show the dressing up clothes to Ariba who did not move from sofa and told them in Punjabi that they were dirty and needed to be washed. They became aware that I was listening with one of the bilingual assistants and, being aware that I would not understand what they were saying, they started to speak English. They then appeared to forget that I was observing and switched back to Punjabi (or decided that they did not want me to be able to understand) and the bilingual assistant explained that Ariba was telling the other girls that the babies were dribbling and need to be cleaned up. Ariba then went to the living room and picked up the telephone, switching back to English because she was aware that I was listening. Such switching suggests considerably sensitivity to the needs of others on the part of the children and provides further evidence of the hybridity and diaspora that is at the heart of the ethnic identities of the children of Pakistani-heritage.

Language switching was also a significant part of the interactions between adults and children. During activities, children and staff frequently moved between English and Punjabi, usually when an idea, request or instruction was not understood in English. During bilingual story times, questions were frequently asked in Punjabi but the children almost always answered in English, perhaps reflecting linguistic capital in their understanding that English was the language used for the formal parts of schooling and sensitivity to those in the group who did not speak Punjabi. Discussions with staff, however, also pointed to a rather different basis for the children choosing to reply in English. Their suggestion was that continued patterns of immigration meant that, in many of the homes, both English and Punjabi were spoken but one parent might be fluent in one language and the other in the other. Grandparents tended to speak Punjabi and older children English but this created a home environment where there was not a great deal of fluency in either English or Punjabi. It was certainly the case that, on a number of occasions,

the bilingual staff reported that they could not understand what the children were saying when the rest of the staff thought they were speaking Punjabi. As discussed earlier, language often seemed an important aspect of participation in experiences but, echoing Fler's research (2006) with Aborigine families, this would suggest that some children of Pakistani-heritage were particularly disadvantaged because they did not have sufficient fluency in either language to be legitimate participants. As Fler (2006) notes 'The significance of language loss is generally not reflected in early childhood discourse ... Confusion over the origins of language and the effect of mixing languages has not yet been considered within the early childhood 1profession' (pp.195-196).

One particular example could well provide further evidence of the above. It concerned an occasion in the home corner when a boy of Pakistani-heritage appeared to be having a lengthy and highly involved telephone conversation in Punjabi. When I asked the bilingual assistant what he had been saying, she said he spoke English at home and although what he was saying sounded like Punjabi, there were no actual words in Punjabi and she did not know what he was saying. It could well be that he lacked the language skills to have the conversation in either English or Punjabi. It might also suggest a desire to be able to speak Punjabi because he had heard other children do so and felt that he lacked the linguistic capital that would allow him access into the community of practices of those who spoke Punjabi in the nursery, pointing to the ways in which language may well act as a boundary marker of ethnic identity.

Over the course of the study, the complexity of the interplay of ethnicity, class and gender in children's choice of playmates was evident in a number of ways. Whilst remaining relatively rare, later in the year, there were more instances of play involving white-indigenous and children of Pakistani-heritage and more examples of boys and girls with the same and with different skin colour playing

together. There were also a relatively small number of occasions where children from different groups refused to play with each other. There were a number of instances in the home corner where girls of both white-indigenous and Pakistani-heritage refused to allow boys to play with them or to enter the home corner, suggesting a boundary based on gender. In a few cases, boys of white-indigenous heritage also refused to allow white girls and boys and girls of Pakistani-heritage access to the computers, perhaps pointing to both gender and skin colour as significant boundaries. Both the increase and refusal of such play may indicate how boundaries are crossed for some children and in some circumstances but become markers of difference for others. This raises questions about the practices that determine which boundaries can be breached (and how these come to be brokered) and which become immutable (and how the lines come to be drawn).

Staff members paid little attention to ethnicity as a factor in children's access to activities and this had significant implications in terms of participation. Whilst legitimate participation was available to all of the children through their very presence, participation was limited for some of the children and the move to full participation was most readily available for white girls. It could be argued that a denial of legitimate participation is the basis for discrimination on the grounds of race or gender or class. When the lack of ethnic mix in activities was discussed with the staff, this was not something about which they were aware but they appeared to see it as natural. This lack of mixing was most evident in children's freely chosen activities and these were the ones in which they engaged most of the time. The only real directed activities were those that occurred during story time and in these situations there was more mixing. Macro level influences on ethnic identity were evident here, however, because government and local authority policies meant that story groups were organised in terms of English language competence, which led to a separation of the ethnic groups in many of the story sessions. Thus

the children were provided with very few examples of adults and the institution of the nursery seeking to create a community in which the different ethnic groups could mix and interact.

The everyday environment of the nursery, therefore, appeared to function as a border marker between home and school. The all female staff, the decoration of the nursery and the activities created an early childhood environment that left many children facing considerable challenges in being able to participate in the community that was created. Language was a key factor in how far children were able to participate. Whilst the bilingual staff had a significant brokering role in terms of language and the children's understanding of the activities, they also occupied a shifting insider/outsider position in relation to the predominantly white middle-class practices of early years education and their ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage. In the children's freely chosen activities, they generally played with same sex, same ethnic group friends and the boys of Pakistani-heritage were the least likely to interact early in the year, perhaps reflecting the way that they were protected by mothers and sisters and female cousins. Story times were the main adult-directed sessions but, because the groups generally reflected the children's English language competence, they provided few opportunities for children from different ethnic groups to mix and interact. Some of the children of Pakistani-heritage, particularly girls, showed considerable sophistication in switching between English and Punjabi but other children appeared not to have yet achieved any real degree of fluency in either language and these children were most likely to be at the margins, least likely to be able to participate.

Performances of Ethnic Identity during Special Occasions and Celebrations: exploring how the children viewed their own ethnicity and that of others through their activities and language (The full ethnography may be found in Appendix 4, p.210)

If the everyday nursery environment created one particular boundary that marked out gender, class, ethnicity and language as key factors in determining participation, special occasions and celebrations drew particular attention to these different identities. Looking at participation and ethnicity through major celebrations is very important as these are used as significant markers of human passage through the years. The performative nature of identity was particularly apparent at malleable and porous boundary moments related to celebrations such as Eid and Christmas and special occasions such as school trips where the masks of children, staff and researcher often appeared ill-fitting and shifting and slipped to give a glimpse of identities behind, between and beyond, rather in the manner suggested by Bhabha (1994, 1996). During trips to the seaside, there were a number of ways in which ethnic identity manifested itself. The nursery travelled to the seaside by train and whilst several of the children of white-indigenous heritage had made local trips by rail, very few of the children and only a few of the staff of Pakistani-heritage had done so before, pointing to both socio-economic issues and perhaps differing cultural practices in relation to travel. On arrival at the seaside, the children went to the beach and the teacher tried to lead them in running across the sand but four of the children were very uncertain and would not run at first. Once they were persuaded to run, they found this extremely difficult since they were unfamiliar with the texture of sand. Some children remained very wary of the beach and Adnan, for example, looked very puzzled by the sunbathers and asked 'why they all dead?' Zahir replied 'no they asleep'. Michael shouted 'no!!! - silly - they are just getting a tan' (see Appendix 4, pp.222-223).

Boundary moments such as this provided some of the clearest signs of the ways in which the children understood the world and of how these understandings were shaped by their experiences as members of particular families and communities. Adnan appeared anxious because he saw the sunbathers as dead and he was reluctant to go near them, perhaps unfamiliar with death or perhaps feeling concerned that he might die as well if he went on the beach or perhaps rather shocked that the nursery should take him to a place with dead people!. Zahir appeared to understand the beach as somewhere that people sleep, whilst only Michael understood the way in which those who are white seek to remove some of the whiteness of their skin. If ethnic identity is partly written on the skin as Butler (1999, 2nd edn) suggests it does not depend entirely on skin colour as a marker. The argument that is being made here suggests that ethnic identity is much more than written on the skin because it is inextricably embedded in gender and class identities. It is also argued that ethnic identity is a trajectory that is influenced by the accumulation of knowledge. In this case, in experiencing the notion of lying on the beach, relaxing and getting a sun tan, the children observe a wider difference than just a difference in the nursery and they learn more about the wider society in which they are embedded.

Events surrounding Eid pointed to the ways in which ethnic and religious identities were most marked in relation to an event or boundary that marked out difference. A construction area had been set up with bricks shaped and painted to make a mosque but these were not discussed with the children and the children showed no sign of doing more than building towers and knocking them down. Whilst this is not untypical of the play of many children at this age, the silence surrounding Eid was evident in other activities. It could reflect a lack of confidence and knowledge or fear of offence (Mazzei, 2003) on the part of the staff but it could be indicative of other issues. In making the cards, in many cases, the staff did not

explain to the children what they were making or why. Once the Eid cards had been made, they were displayed in part of the nursery but the sign that accompanied the display was in Urdu only. The bilingual nursery nurse who had created the display said that there was no particular reason for the sign being only in Urdu: it was just that they already had the sign from another year. The provision of a sign in only one language could be seen to suggest the use of language to enclose rather than broker and create leaching between religious and cultural experiences and could give the message that Eid celebrations were of significance only to those of Pakistani-heritage.

The children of Pakistani-heritage also had Urdu only in their cards whilst the white-indigenous children had English only. This suggests the role of language as a marker of both religion and ethnicity and complexity regarding the ways in which boundaries are created and crossed. On the one hand, all of the children had made Eid cards, crossing boundaries between different religious groups, on the other, the use of single language cards reinstituted a linguistic boundary. It seemed that there was a concern about upsetting the minority of white parents who, it was felt, may oppose their children making Eid cards. It could be, equally, however, that the silences and lack of consideration for the Eid activity reflect a lack of recognition or acceptance of its importance, or perhaps 'disidentification' (Hodges, 1998), on the part of the staff because of allegiances and beliefs allied to the dominant discourses of the West and of Christianity (see later). Whatever the reasons of the staff, there is a sense in which their assumptions and beliefs about what is important in early years education led to marginalisation and alienation for some of the children and operated to mark out ethnic identity through otherness.

In one story time, where no bilingual support was available, none of the children showed much interest in a book about preparing for Eid and were unresponsive but when the practitioner introduced a box of

mendhi and clothes to be worn at Eid, the children became very excited and started to clap and laugh and talk to each other. The children were then taken to look at an Eid display, where they got very excited and ran up and down the corridor. What seems to emerge here once again is perhaps that books were less interesting or accessible to the children because of a lack of English language competence that served to prevent children from participating fully in the community of nursery practice whilst action, movement and resources provided the basis for more legitimate participation. It seemed that many of the practices surrounding Eid were embodied in languages that the staff and children did not share sufficiently but which could be accessed more effectively through the use of 'cultural tools' (Vygotsky, 1978) to shape learning and identity. This may explain why the visual, the sensory and the practical appeared to provide ways in which staff and children could participate in and share a little of the practices surrounding Eid celebrations.

Evidence from the study suggests both fixity and fluidity in relation to skin colour, religion and cultural celebrations as elements of ethnic identity. The making of Eid cards and calendars and group times where Eid was discussed again pointed to the ways in which ethnic and religious identities are most marked in relation to an event or boundary that marks out difference. There are echoes of Mead's (1967) and Caverero's (2000) contention here that identity is marked only in relation to the other. The Eid cards and sign were indicative of complicated issues in relation to language, religion and ethnicity. On a very small number of occasions, the children voiced their own views about culture and identity in ways that were strongly suggestive of essentialism. Whilst making his Eid card, Mitchell said he would not be celebrating Eid at home 'because we're not dark are we?' (see Appendix 4, p.212). He was keen to celebrate Eid, however, saying that he would like a Spiderman suit for his new clothes. He appeared to associate religious events with skin colour, suggesting a construction of ethnic identity and religion based on

colour difference perhaps because this represents his experience and in that he is probably no different from most people. Other identities were also important for Mitchell, however, and on some occasions there were signs of binary fixings. These fixings, however, emerge from different aspects of his identity and need to be considered in relation to each other. He was aware that he was being brought up in a Christian household and that he was 'not dark', suggesting a construction of ethnicity and religion based on colour difference. There is also evidence of identity based on age and personal advantage, however, as religion is swept aside as a concern at the prospect of a Spiderman outfit perhaps suggesting ways in which different aspects of identity may be selected in different circumstances for particular purposes, much as Swidler (1986) suggests.

This sense of fluidity and fixing was also apparent in conversations with children of Pakistani-heritage. One girl, for example, commented whilst making her Eid card that: 'Eid isn't my happy birthday, I had my happy birthday yesterday...' (see Appendix 4, pp.212-213). It could be suggested that she demonstrated confusion over different forms of celebration but it could also point to a sense in which whilst religion may be significant as a marker of ethnic identity, it is an aspect of identity that may be seen as more or less important according to the particular situation, perhaps illustrating the ways in which children at this age position themselves in relation to particular cultural events and practices and different aspects of their identities are important to them in different situations. Choosing an identity based on birthdays marks out similarities between children, choosing one based on religious celebrations brings ethnic identity into clear focus because of differences in practices.

Conflict or difference at the boundary was evident on other occasions. During one story time, a girl of Pakistani-heritage said that mendhi should not be worn by a 'white woman', reinforcing the

notion of skin colour and religious difference as a marker of who can and who cannot belong to a particular ethnic group (see Appendix 4, p.214). Skin colour might be seen to operate as a boundary marker during a trip to the seaside when Hamad wanted to play cricket on the beach and decided that he would play for Pakistan and I would play for England:

H.: You be England and I'll be Pakistan.

I try to hit the ball and succeed.

I.: I'll be Pakistan now and you can be England

H. No, I Pakistan. You be England. I live in England but my country is Pakistan. I Pakistan guy.

(See Appendix 4, p.223)

There are echoes here of Calhoun's earlier suggestion (2000) that ethnicity emerges from dynamic interactions between identities that are produced in local contexts and statements of unity with contexts beyond the local. These relationships are complex, however, in this case, suggesting a constellation of local and perhaps national existences that recognise at least a duality based only on 'living' in a country whilst there is also a trajectory onwards to identification with a country and its values considerably removed in distance from the local that is seen as the 'real' site of identity.

Christmas celebrations were particularly thought-provoking in relation to fixity, negotiation and shift in ethnic identities (see Appendix 4, p.214). It was as though there was an unquestioning acceptance that Christmas should be celebrated despite it being relevant in religious terms to only a small minority of the children and families. Whilst it could be argued that Christmas is now a secular holiday and so is relevant to all children, the staff saw it as important largely because of their own religious beliefs, as we shall see.

Garlands hung from the ceiling the length of the nursery and all of the display boards had been covered with Christmas-related materials in a manner that had not happened in relation to Eid (or any other religious festival). A Christmas tree had been set up in the entrance and one of the girls of Pakistani-heritage asked why there was a tree indoors. A member of staff explained that some people were about to celebrate Christmas and that they had trees indoors with decorations on them. A story board activity contained characters from the nativity and the role play area contained nativity dressing up clothes (including crowns). The story board was not understood by a number of the children and some asked who the people were. The children had made Christmas cards, which included self-portraits using handprints to form the faces of reindeer. Despite the vast majority of the children being of Pakistani-heritage, universally the faces were pink. An obvious interpretation would be that the staff had paid no heed to most of the children having brown skin, thereby marginalising them in the process. In discussion with the staff, however, they suggested that the faces were not intended to be pink and simply reflected what had happened when the brown paint had been placed on to blue card but this is very difficult to accept.

It was striking that a feature of the Christmas activities was the performance of a nativity play by a majority of children of Pakistani-heritage. The concert rehearsals pointed again to the significance of language in marking boundaries. Some of the children joined in with the songs but the majority did not. It seemed also, however, to be related to a significant minority not understanding what was happening and responding by shouting and clapping. The children who understood least well what was happening in relation to the Christmas celebrations were those who spoke least English. They were also those from the most traditional homes with the strongest signs of non-Western decoration and furniture and the strongest evidence of Islam, pointing to the embedded nature of ethnicity and boundaries in participation. Where the children understood, had the

necessary language and had sufficient cultural capital, they were offered the opportunity of participation but when they did not, they were marginalised and marked out as 'other'. One member of staff lamented that the nativity was much easier to rehearse and perform in the days when the majority of the children had some experience of it from church. Whilst the staff felt that they were offering the children legitimate participation in the religious, cultural and ethnic practices of the nursery, lack of appreciation of what was not shared in terms of experience and understanding led to marginalisation for some of the children.

Fixity, anguish and fluidity in relation to conceptualisations of ethnic identity were apparent in discussions with the staff. The head teacher explained that Christmas was seen as such an important part of the culture of school life and that its significance as an ethnic as well as cultural and religious event was simply taken for granted and planned for in a way that the celebration of Eid was not. Perhaps greater awareness of the appropriateness for the children concerned of particular practices would lead to fewer boundary moments, fewer occasions where ethnic identity emerges out of marginalisation. This points again to the invisibility of whiteness (Dyer, 1997, Ahmed, 2004) and its customs, beliefs and values because, even in settings where everyone is white, being white is seen as the norm and is a veiled silence (Mazzei, 2003) that is not remarked upon. The head teacher did also say that the staff had been discussing the meaning of Christmas in a nursery attended by a majority of children of Pakistani - heritage. She said that the dilemma was really that most of the staff were practising Christians who attended church regularly and felt that their beliefs were compromised if they did not provide (colonize?) the children with opportunities to understand and celebrate the meaning of Christmas, seeming to identify their beliefs, which caused marginalisation for some of the children, as more significant than the ability of the children to participate. In discussion with the rest of the staff, two of the three teachers questioned the

relevance of Christmas celebrations whilst the nursery nurses felt that the time and festivities were appropriate and helped develop the children's confidence.

Two of the bilingual assistants said that Muslim parents were quite happy for Christmas to be celebrated because they had come to understand the significance that Christmas has in schools. One also said that although her family were devout Muslims, her niece and nephew had a Christmas tree and received Christmas presents each year, reflecting the way in which Christmas has become secular, and only featured as a boundary marker in relation to religious components. In this sense, Christmas was 'performed' in growing numbers of Muslim homes as a cultural but non-religious festival. Perhaps the concerns of the teachers but not of the bilingual assistants point to the ways in which suggesting resistance is easier for those with more power, whilst those with less power learn to perform what they perceive the dominant culture expects and come to see this as part of who they are. It could also be a question of using new-found social and economic capital in order to renegotiate social and cultural identity.

Another bilingual nursery nurse talked about the way that 'Asian parents just can't be bothered' and this was why they did not come to the concert. In so doing, she appeared to seek to 'other' (Foucault, 2002) the Pakistani community as different from her, reflecting both a shifting ethnic identity and mobility in terms of her status and greater affluence that marked her out differently in class terms. It is important to recognise, however, in line with the critical realist stance of the study, that causes and effects cannot be linked together in any singular manner and that the relationship between them is conceptualised as rhizomatic. She was both an insider and an outsider in terms of how she viewed the parents and their comments that she 'should know that we were getting ready for Eid', and that was why they had not attended the concert, suggested that that they

saw her as both an insider and an outsider in relation to them since she was now a part of a predominantly white nursery team. Brah's insight (1996, p.175) is significant when she suggests that

'The boundaries of ethnicity may be drawn around a variety of criteria – language, religion, memories of a shared history and visions of a shared destiny, a belief in common origins – so that one may be positioned within more than one field of ethnicity depending upon the criteria at play within a particular context. The processes of boundary construction and the specific criteria invoked in a given situation are subject to political, cultural and economic contingencies.'

There are echoes here of the way in which Wenger (1998) refers to the interstices where people are partly inside but also partly outside and connected with other communities of practice. In this sense someone such as a bilingual nursery nurse who has accessed some of the practices of the dominant discourses of early childhood education is therefore able to have some influence on the negotiation of new meanings in relation to how ethnic identity is experienced and perceived.

In summary, the effects that were recorded during home visits, discussions with parents, observation of every day nursery activities and special events are considered to be evidence of underlying causal tendencies that shape young children's ethnic identities. Evidence from the home visits suggested that ethnic origin and degree of affluence were significant factors in understanding the influences at work in shaping identities. In many homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, religion was also significant but rarely so for families of white-indigenous origin. Discussion with parents pointed to language, friendships, family arrangements, gender and religion as significant aspects of ethnic identity. In the nursery, ethnic identity

was usually experienced as a difference and 'other' and was most evident at boundary moments, rarely acknowledged by staff, where lack of familiarity with experiences meant that legitimate participation was not possible for the whole community. Language often marked difference and prevented participation. Skin colour was a common marker of 'us' and 'not us' in children's emerging experiences of ethnic identity, as were some practices associated with religion. Lack of participation in events led to other signs of ethnic difference when children then behaved in ways that were seen as inappropriate by the staff. Ethnic identity is also shifting and cumulative, as we saw in the way in which many children were able to participate more as the year progressed, and also in the positioning of the bilingual nursery nurses. The concluding chapter will summarise this evidence systematically in relation to the study's aims, which include consideration of implications for practice.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications

The philosophers have only described the world, in various ways, the point is to change it (Marx, 1845, Thesis XI).

So we return now to examine the study's aims. First, the tentative conclusions that can be drawn about the notion of ethnicity and its relationship with identity will be considered. Children's ethnic identity appears to be experienced and performed (Butler, 1999, 2nd edn) as erratic and stable, fixed and fleeting, involving belonging and marginalisation, most visible at the boundaries (Wenger, 1998) and spaces between (Bhabha, 1994) different ways of being, relating and understanding. As such, children's ethnic identities, it is suggested, are best conceptualised as rhizomatic in that 'there is no beginning from which a linear sequence would derive, but rather densifications, intensifications, reinforcements, interjections, showerings' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p.362) and involve a 'journey among intersections, nodes, and regionalizations through a multi-centred complexity' (Lather, 1993, p.680, after Deleuze, 1992, p.163-4, cited in Brown and Jones, 2001, p.180). The notion of the rhizome is considered a useful conceptualisation in that its structure is not incoherent, arbitrary and chaotic but rather one of nodal points, shooting off along different trajectories that link back to form a whole but in often unpredictable ways. Thus whilst identities may usefully be conceived of as shifting and splintering performances (Butler, 1999, 2nd edn) that are negotiated at particular points and in relation to particular events, there are ways in which skin colour, for example, is not negotiable much in the way that Paechter (2006b) notes in relation to the gendered body and identities also carry the imprint of particular community practices (Wenger, 1998) or workings of the habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 2nd edn). In critical realist terms, whilst the children's performances in relation to ethnic identity are shifting and interwoven with other identities, there are ways in which these identities pre-exist the children and do not depend only

on their agency and actions. On the other hand, ethnic identity is not independent of the children and their actions and performances both maintain and transform and so ethnic identity appears as both situational and temporal.

We turn next to consider the part played by family and community in children's expressions of ethnic identity. Ethnic origin and degree of affluence (often considered a mark of social class) emerged as significant factors in understanding the influences that shape children's identities. Whilst religion appeared to be a marker of ethnic identity for only one family of white-indigenous origin, it was much more of a marker in the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, though there were also significant differences between the families. Signs of Islam were most evident in the least affluent homes, whilst greater wealth, as witnessed by dress and house decoration, seemed to lead to a decline in the presence and significance of external markers of religion in defining ethnic identity. This appears to point to the significance of the intersection of socio-economic status and ethnicity. Critical realist analysis might point to affluence as a causal tendency that leads to the granting of more legitimate participation, thereby creating the conditions for full participation in the dominant communities of the particular society. It could also be argued, for example, that the adoption of Western styles of decoration and dress lead to more participation and create the conditions for greater affluence.

Many families of Pakistani-heritage had extended family networks and identity was seen as distributed over the whole family. In this sense, it was generally not possible to separate ethnic from family identity. There was a sense, however, in which identity was in flux and, whilst many saw language and culture as significant aspects of identity, they had different views regarding the desirability of cultural and language shift. Many of them seemed to see shift and hybridity as being important in order to be able to access power and

accumulate educational capital. What we see here, from a critical realist perspective, is the way in which the space for agency in reproducing, understanding and transforming ethnic identity is constrained by social structures but also how these structures are themselves socially produced and so are also subject to change.

In the case of the white families, markers of ethnic identity were difficult to discern, reflecting the unremarked upon and almost invisible nature of whiteness in Western society (see, for example, Dyer, 1997; Ahmed, 2004). Markers of ethnic identity were here heavily related to affluence and social class and were implicit in the noting of socio-economic circumstances and lack of religious markers in most of the homes. The most visible marker of white identity was where it coincided with poverty and became visible through shabby house decoration and lack of cleanliness.

Consideration is given now to the part that the particular nursery, the adults there and other children play in the children's expressions and experiences of ethnic identity. The research points to a conception of ethnic identity as part of a multiple network of performances in which identities of gender, age, class, ethnicity, culture and religion interact at boundaries that mark out what is significant, problematic or difficult to understand for children and adults in different situations. Instead of a view of ethnic identity as fixed from birth, there is a sense of ever-shifting and competing identities which accrue from religious, cultural and social experiences which are shaped by political, economic, educational and psychological discourses at micro, meso and macro levels as they are enacted in the nursery and the children's homes. Customs, practices, performances and understandings in relation to ethnicity and other aspects of identity appeared to be shaped not only through what was done or said but also through what was not done and not said. There were the silences of some of the children who appeared to experience disidentification at best and sometimes marginalisation but also the

silences of the staff, which in some cases were Mazzei's (2003) silences of politeness, lack of knowledge and fear of offence but, at other times, those of white privilege. Discourses of power could be understood as operating to engage more affluent white-indigenous children and, to a lesser extent, the affluent Pakistani-heritage families, but to alienate and exclude poorer white children and those of Pakistani-heritage. Some of the silences in the nursery appeared to emerge from an environment and practices that were at odds with the worlds from which many of the children came.

The children's experiences and practices in relation to ethnic identity were most evident at boundary moments where some children were included as participants but where many were marginalised. In such cases, ethnic identity appeared as difference and as problematic when the children behaved in ways that were not considered appropriate. There were signs of agency but an agency created by structural marginalisation that often found itself in conflict with the expectations of the nursery. There were also signs of considerable fluidity, however, as some children came to learn about the practices of the majority and the white-indigenous children came to learn about the language, customs and beliefs of those of Pakistani-heritage. It remains the case, however, that the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion were drawn around culture, religion, language, maturity and skin colour (all of which can be understood as negotiated practices, rather than existing as separate from the social). In this sense, whilst it is more complex than the words suggest, identities did appear to be 'written on the skin' as Butler (1999, 2nd edn) argues. Despite the lack of 'internal substance', the children did appear, for much of the time, to work with and perform the above apparent fixities 'in the mode of belief' (Butler, 1999, 2nd edn p.179).

The research points to the way in which white-indigenous more affluent children, (particularly girls), were encouraged as legitimate participants but to how less affluent white children, (particularly

boys), and the least affluent and most traditionally Muslim children were marginalised as outsiders, usually because of barriers of language, behaviour and qualifying experience (Wenger, 1998). In such circumstances, some children formed their own communities of practice which excluded other children and adults and which led to them being considered as badly behaved or in some way deficient (Robinson and Diaz, 2006). Other children became ever-more skilled at engaging in diasporic practices which allowed them to span majority and minority communities of practice.

Finally we consider the wider implications of the research and its practical application in early childhood education. Whilst the small scale of the present study is acknowledged and its findings in many ways limited to the context of the particular nursery, there are professional implications that reach beyond the local, through what Brown and Duguid (2000) term 'networks of practice'. If participation is to be understood as an ontological imperative, some very significant issues emerge which need consideration and negotiation. If, as has been suggested, ethnic identity is to be understood as played out in dynamic tension between the relatively stable qualities and features (what Vygotsky might term 'fossilised behaviours') of social and cultural communities and contexts and individuals who seek to negotiate their emerging, evolving and changing ethnicities, there are particularly important consequences to be considered when those individuals are both newcomers and young children.

Ethnic identity is thus conceived of as emerging from practices that have the potential to transform communities and individuals but how this happens depends both on the individuals and on how far the established community is willing to 'open doors to let the newcomer get access' as Blaka and Filstad (2007, p.67) note. There were many occasions in the present study when, generally through lack of awareness, the doors were firmly shut, especially for some children from the most traditional and least affluent Pakistani-heritage homes,

reflecting the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity in children's lives. In adult communities, according to Blaka and Filstad (2007), a significant part of the learning process is for the newcomer to seek to understand 'the institutionalised ways of behaving, of thinking and of solving problems, and being able to pose the relevant questions' (p.69) and they consider that the most successful entrants to a new community of practice are those who are most proactive but this poses considerable challenges when the task involves young children and entails seeking to understand the communities of practice of white, middle-class early childhood education.

There is, therefore, a key need for those who operate on the peripheries of overlapping communities of practice, such as bilingual staff, to be supported in working as brokers. They have a significant brokering role to play between those who invite participation and those children who are at risk of marginalisation. This role needs to involve the development of shared cultural resources which enable children to move towards full participation without experiencing disidentification. As in the present study, bilingual staff are frequently some of the least qualified in early childhood settings and their lack of qualifications also means that they lack power to influence practices. The Sector-Endorsed Early Years Foundation degree is the most popular route to a higher education qualification for staff across the country but there has been little success with recruiting and retaining students of South-Asian heritage (Snape et al, 2007), perhaps pointing to exclusion from educational communities of practice. There is therefore also a need for higher education to be more accommodating of the needs of such staff in order to support them in gaining additional qualifications that will enable them to access more influential roles. This is likely to involve the provision of higher education programmes in local communities.

What is also needed is a reconsideration of the type of environment that is created for the children in their early experiences of nursery

education. The new Early Years Foundation Stage materials (DfES, 2007a&b) suggest that 'all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family backgroundshould have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development (DfES, 2007a, p.10) and make the apparently simple exhortation that 'an appropriate environment is essential ... reasonable adjustments must be made so that premises ... reflect the ethnic, cultural and social diversity in society (DfES, 2007b, p.18). However, this is far more complex than it might seem. As Fler (2006) recognises, so often in early childhood education there is too little recognition that cultural practices are not shared and too little clarity about the socio-cultural resources that children from different backgrounds bring to the experience of early childhood education.

It may be that this is challenging and uncomfortable, involving, as it does, the questioning of old certainties in relation to children, families and backgrounds, child-rearing practices, gender, religion, culture, friendships and early childhood educational practices. This may involve real dilemmas in engaging with beliefs and values that are at odds with and strongly opposed by white, middle-class, child-centred early childhood education. It requires a willingness to entertain entry into diasporic educational spaces that provide for the negotiation of new practices in early childhood settings that better reflect the coming together of different and shifting ethnic, cultural, class, religious and educational concerns.

Staff development and work with parents and the local community is needed for 'making visible fossilized early childhood practices and for re-imagining new practices and beliefs' (Fler, 2006, p.193) that reflect a broader range of perspectives. Edwards (2006) argues that this can only be brought about through 'appropriate, sensitive, and extensive professional learning to allow educators the opportunity to examine their existing beliefs and clarify the understandings they

hold regarding key concepts and terms utilized in early childhood education' (p.248.) The challenges are heightened by the need to re-imagine and engage with new possibilities whilst at the same time working critically with them as they become reified in order to avoid the creation of new inscriptions, new orthodoxies. Care needs to be taken to ensure legitimate participation in re-imagining those possibilities in order to avoid the danger that parents and the local community are homogenised and also that the local community is not colonised in order to appropriate something of what the community has and early childhood educators perceive that they need.

There is, in other words, a clear need for far-reaching professional development that creates a discursive space that allows early childhood educators to examine how learning, children, families and communities are being constructed in early childhood education. This needs to enable early childhood educators to reflect upon the beliefs inherent in the current *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (QCA, 2000), the new *Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfES, 2007a&b), the environment that is created and the experiences that are provided in order to consider what these say and suggest about the children, families and communities with whom they work and how appropriate they are to the local context. There then needs to be consideration of how best to create an early childhood environment, particularly at the point of transition from home to nursery, that is more representative of the children's backgrounds. Macro-level policy influences which lead to children being grouped by language ability also need to be considered in terms of the damage they do in promoting segregation and boundary fixity between different groups of children. Currently these are reinforcing old identities rather than seeking to shape new ones.

In order to do this in ways that are genuinely inclusive of the local community, there is a need for the staff to develop more detailed knowledge about the children and their families. Home visits

currently gather information that is considered useful and also give information about the nursery but the visits are not primarily about negotiating the starting school experience but about informing parents about organisation and expectations and judging how well the children and families are likely to 'measure up'. This rather echoes the new *Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfES, 2007a&b) which refers to the importance of partnership with parents, but this partnership is conceived of as involving 'sharing information and offering support to learning in the home' (DfES, 2007b, p.10). There is little or no recognition of partnership as a two-way learning process, with the emphasis being rather on schools working with parents to enable them to support their children in ways that schools see as helpful. Consideration needs to be given to a longer period of visiting that involves the staff gaining more knowledge of the children and their homes. A particular concern needs to be to learn about the language practices of the home in order that staff are well-informed about the possibilities of language loss (Fleer, 2006) since language competence is so important in terms of access to legitimate participation in ethnic, cultural, religious and educational communities of practice. This longer period of visiting needs also to involve parents spending more time with their children when they first start to attend nursery in order that border work can be carried out that enables seepage between the different communities of practice in ways that start to shape new local communities. In the nursery environment itself, particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring: that spoken and written language reflects home and community practices; that decoration, furnishings, and food are reflective of the children's previous cultural experiences; that activities and experiences are congruent with what children will have experienced at home; and that religious and cultural events are reflective of the whole community.

Summary of Key Professional Implications

Children's ethnic identities, it has been argued, are conceptualised as inextricably linked with other identities such as class, religion and gender, and as including both shifting and fixed performances that are enacted within communities of practice. Participation is viewed as an ontological imperative but, in the present study, this was problematic for particular groups of children. These difficulties risk marginalisation and fossilisation of all ethnic identities through lack of opportunity for transformation in communities of practice. Such marginalisation leads to discrimination on the one hand and prejudice on the other. Therefore the following professional implications emerge from the study:

- local early childhood educators, parents and communities need to work together to examine customs, practices and beliefs and explore what the local early childhood curriculum and environment should look like if fossilization and marginalisation are to be avoided. This work needs to be on-going as new practices become reified in order to avoid the creation of new inscriptions, new orthodoxies.
- home visiting needs to involve staff gaining more knowledge of the children, their families, their homes, their communities and the complexity of language practices
- parents need to be encouraged to spend more time with their children when they first start to attend nursery in order that boundaries can be brokered and that the borders between different communities of practice become more porous
- particularly at the point of transition from home to nursery, an early childhood environment needs to be created that is representative of the children's backgrounds and which makes particular use of visual, sensory and practical experiences in order to promote legitimate participation

- in the nursery environment itself, particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring that spoken and written language, decoration, furnishings, and food, activities and experiences and religious and cultural events are reflective of the whole community in order to avoid marginalisation.
- those who operate on the peripheries of overlapping communities of practice, such as bilingual staff, need to be supported in working as brokers so that children are enabled to move towards full participation without experiencing disidentification
- higher education needs to support such staff in ways that meet their needs in order that they are able to gain additional qualifications that will enable them to access more influential roles where they are better placed to support and encourage participation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

**Ethnography from
Home Visits Prior to Starting
Nursery in August
2004 and 2005**

The Homes

Amongst the families of Pakistani-heritage, in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, there were three main decorative styles that appeared to correspond with the affluence and degree of religiosity of the families. About a quarter of the families appeared relatively affluent, adopted Western styles of decoration and had relatively few signs of Islam. The mothers and children were generally fluent in English.

The following are typical:

Extract 1

The front garden of the terraced house is carefully tended and there is a doorbell that works. We are shown into a front room which has pale walls, laminate floors and pale leather sofas. There are stripped pine doors and dado rails. There are lots of candles. The only obviously non-Western piece of furniture is a coffee table with glass top and gold effect legs. There are shelves which are used to display photographs. On the very top shelf, there is a Qu'ran lying on its side. (2004 -2005)

Extract 2

There is a small well tended front garden. We ring the bell and are shown into a hallway with a shoe rack and then into the sitting room which is on the corner of the house. There are green two and three seater sofas. In a corner of the room, there are a computer, desk, chair and book cases with papers. There is also a huge TV with surround-sound in front of the window. A clock and paper weight are the only signs of non-Western culture....Mum speaks English with a non-regional accent and works at a local college. Dad is a software manager in a nearby larger town. Zahir speaks English at home but understands his grandparents when they speak Punjabi – though he

answers in English. When asked what he likes to do, mum says he has recently been to London on a visit, which he had really enjoyed and that he likes jigsaws, cars, play dough and the computer – but he needs to be limited on it though he is very good on it. Mum says he has no particular book favourites but that he goes to the library every couple of weeks. SH mentions some children of Pakistani-heritage who will be starting nursery but mum says that he is friendly with one of the children of white-indigenous heritage. (2005-2006)

Extract 3

We have some difficulty finding the entrance to what proves to be a very imposing house. The garden is well tended and the house is very well maintained with beautiful leaded windows.

When they spot me, Sa'dan's mother goes back into the house and gets a veil. We are shown in through a modern kitchen where there are three women and an eleven month old (Sa'dan's cousin) who is sitting on the work surface. Another older woman comes in.

We are shown into a very large open plan dining area to a sitting area with a three seater sofa and two chairs. The floors all have a wood laminate covering and the walls are white. The dining area has a good quality table and six leather chairs. There is also a high chair. In the sitting room, there is a Persian-style rug and some Persian-style large cushions. The television is tuned to a Sky channel showing a Bollywood film. There is a DVD and video player, some DVDs and some videos, with a fan next to the TV. There are also plants around the room – which is unusual – and dried flowers. (2005-2006)

Whilst the above was generally typical, this was the only family with this style of decoration that lived in a terraced house. Other families with this style of house lived further from the nursery, mostly on one

1960s housing development, in semi-detached bungalows and houses.

About half of the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, fell into another recognisable style where there appeared to be more influence from Islam and from non-Western culture and where the mothers and children spoke some English but were not completely fluent.

Extract 4

We are shown into the backroom of the terraced house, which joins on to the kitchen. This appears to be where the family spend most time in the house. We are invited to sit down on bench-style sofas with lids that lift up and with a storage space inside. The carpet is flowery and the room recently decorated. The TV is turned on with the sound turned down. There is a clock with Arabic writing on it and a calendar with a picture of a mosque. There is also a hi-fi in the corner of the room. There is a large picture with extracts from the Qu'ran in Arabic displayed at an angle on the wall. There are some display shelves with photographs of the children with the parents and grandparents, plastic flowers, mosque ornaments and small frames containing extracts from the Qu'ran (2004-2005).

Extract 5

We approach the garden at the front of the house, which has been concreted over. We go through the hall way to the front room which has a beige carpet and cream leather sofas, a fan, a coffee table very close to a sofa and folding chairs. The fireplace has lots of trophies, especially for volley ball. These are from all over Europe and one of them has a French inscription. Dad works at a sweet centre and there is a huge stack of card printed in Arabic / Urdu and some made up into boxes for use at the sweet centre. There are

also huge stacks of Coke, Lilt, Fanta, Sprite. There are plastic flowers in baskets and large pictures of the mosque in Mecca and extracts from the Qu'ran. There are three Qu'rans on their sides on a corner shelf high up by the door. There is a tall wooden lamp of a rectangular cube shape, which has pictures of waterfalls on the sides ... S talks to mum in Punjabi. There is a child crying in another room ... Mum says that she does not work outside the home and is confused over the date of birth of Tibah - she originally says 27.09.02. Another adult female enters the room, the mother of a cousin who will also be starting nursery One mother is dressed in lime green and red salwar kemise, the other in lilac. Tibah's mother says that she likes playing with dolls and prams and that she is good at most things. ...The interview is conducted almost entirely in Punjabi, which causes feelings of helplessness and lack of understanding for me. The women say that no English is spoken at home and that they do not have a computer. (2005-2006)

In some of these homes, the television programmes were Western ones but in a small number they were non-Western, often 'Bollywood' style programmes. The number of families watching these programmes had increased from one summer to the next.

The final quarter of the homes appeared to be the poorest in financial terms, showed the greatest influence from Islam and the mothers and children spoke little English:

Extract 6

The paint is flaking from the outside of the house and the curtains are dirty. Two windows are broken and are boarded up. The window frames appear rotten. We knock on the door for a long time before getting a response. When we go inside the carpets are thread bare. The wall paper is old and is peeling in places. We are shown into the front room. It is a very hot day and the mother insists on bringing a

huge fan. Once she has set it up, it is very difficult for us all to fit into the room. There is unframed script from the Qu'ran on the walls. There are pictures of mosques in frames displayed at angles on the wall and there is a model of a mosque in a cabinet. There are other Arabic / Islamic symbols in the cabinet. There is a clock on the wall, decorated around the edge with Arabic script. (2004-2005)

Extract 7

We go through a small hallway to a room at the back of the houseThere are three bench style sofas.... There are mosque and non-Western pictures attached directly to the walls.... There is an old coffee table and old dark wood cupboards and drawers. Near the TV, cable box and video recorder, there is also a receiver on the wall that brings prayers from the mosque. There is an industrial-style sewing machine set up in a corner (2005-2006).

A small number of homes pointed to the ways in which the families combined different cultural aspects in their lives:

Extract 8

As we enter the backroom, conversation is difficult because of a radio receiver on the wall with prayers being relayed from the mosque in the centre of town. One of the nursery staff asks if it is coming all the way from Pakistan. She is told it is coming from the Mosque next to Morrisons. A large clock is surrounded by numerous unframed extracts from the Qu'ran above the fire place. The clock itself is decorated with Arabic writing but then plays 'There's no place like home'. .. The mother does not speak English. Father speaks some but Isra is crying in another room and he goes to her – without saying anything. An older sister is translating but her understanding is poor – LP later says she thinks she has special needs.... The parents do not work outside the home and both wear salwar kameez.... Later Isra waves from a window as we leave. (2004-2005)

Extract 9

We arrive to find three children playing outside. There is a road mat in the front garden and granddad is sitting eating fish and sausage in batter. A younger man appears and shows us in to the house. He is dressed in light blue salwar kemise. The family own a takeaway called Dial a Pizza and he says he is a chef and driver....Aiza is in lime green dress and is wearing lots of bangles. She is very engrossed by the sticklebricks that she has been brought to play with and gets very angry when a younger boy tries to take some. Haseen is in western clothes (with a Timberland top) as is a younger sibling who has one trainer on and one bare foot. At intervals, another woman and another man appear on the other side of the glass French doors that have a sofa across them. The children bang on the glass at each other. Father says Aiza speaks a little bit of English but mostly Punjabi and thinks she will need support with English...

They say Aiza and Haseen will try anything and are good at talking. Haseen says he wants to stay at Offsprings – he will be coming in the afternoons and Aiza will be coming in the mornings – dad says this is because he works til 2 – 3am and will need to sleep whilst she is at nursery... In Punjabi, Aiza says she wants to come to nursery where the toys are (2005-2006).

In each year of data collection, there was one home that did not entirely fit into any of the categories. Islam was a significant influence there were many signs of non-Western approaches to family life.

Extract 10

We visit the homes of three cousins who live in six terraced houses in the same street. We have been told that we just need to go to a house in the middle of the street where we will find all of the families.

This house is a communal house where the three cousins spend the day time. We are shown into a room with bench type settees arranged in rows. It rather has the feeling of a waiting room. There is nothing in the room except for these settees and a table. The wallpaper is peeling and there are no pictures on the walls and no ornaments. Walls have been knocked down between some of the houses but the six houses are not all next to each other and the families say they are trying to buy the intervening houses. They say that they have been making as much noise as possible but cannot get the people to move out of the other houses (2004-2005).

Extract 11

Before the visit, the staff do not think that I will be allowed into this house. Several families live together in at least two houses that have been knocked together. The staff consider them very strictly Muslim and were told on the last visit that the women do not leave the house.

We go in the door of one house but we are then shown through a door way space to the other house and shown into back room. My appearance appears to surprise them but no comment is made. Unusually, however, one of the men stays to answer the questions. Opposite the room we are in, which is quite bare, is another room and when the door opens we see that this is very full of people and is decorated in bright blues, with lots of flowers, numerous framed extracts from the Qu'ran and pictures of mosques.

In our room, there are two floral bench style sofas, a dresser full of china, a coffee table and two smaller tables with plastic covers on. The wall paper is a patterned white. There is a heavily patterned carpet with a gas fire in a marble fire place. There are two medium and one small vases of plastic flowers on the top. There are nine hangings with extracts from the Qu'ran and pictures of Mecca in gold frames – some are at angles on the wall and have nails underneath

to make them hang like this. On a small table, there is what looks like a prayer stool with handles on either side. There are ornate ceiling light fitting with lots of bulbs at angles and what look like wind chimes to make up the shade (2005-2006).

In 2005 - 2006, the local authority had begun to request information about nationality and ethnicity. Most parents gave their children's nationality as British but one father said 'British Muslim'. In terms of ethnicity, the options on the form were 'Kasmir Pakistani', 'Mirpur Pakistani' or 'Other Pakistani', having been chosen from a wide range of options by the staff. Most of the parents gave their ethnicity as 'Other Pakistani' or appeared unsure – almost all parents checked with each other. On a small number of occasions, there was annoyance that the most common local ethnicity, 'Gujarat Pakistani', was not available as an option. There were few exceptions but one mother said that 'we are called East African Asians' and gave their first language as Kutchi. The older sister attended last year and played predominantly with a girl of white indigenous heritage.

In the 2004-2005, with two exceptions, the families of white-indigenous heritage appeared to live in challenging circumstances and to be relatively poor in financial terms. With the same exceptions, they lived close to the nursery and in local authority housing.

Extract 12

We enter the terraced house directly off the street. Elvis Presley was blaring out from the house next door where the door is open and there are writings from the Qu'ran in the hall way. When we arrive the mother and her friends are in the kitchen whilst three children under four are in the front room. There is a baby gate between the rooms. The television is turned on. The house seems not to have been decorated recently and the furniture is old but reasonably clean.

There is a security camera above the door and we are told that this is so that the parents can be upstairs and keep an eye on the children. The youngest child is in a play pen where there are no toys and he is standing up, trying to see the TV. His complexion is very pale and his nappy clearly needs changing. Mum comments that he is so good that they forget about him (2004-2005).

The staff mentioned issues surrounding drug use when visiting a number of the white families. Few of the families had computers but often said that they were about to get one. Very few of them found it easy when they were asked questions about what their aspirations were for their children at nursery ('everything there is to learn really') though one joked that she wanted her daughter to get her GCSEs. Most were concerned about happiness and becoming more confident. Very few of the homes had books in the living room. CDs and DVDs were much more prevalent. Most said that the children enjoyed reading but few could suggest favourite stories. The things that the parents said their children liked doing were divided along gender lines with boys being considered to like bikes, scooters and playing outside and girls dolls and dressing up. A number of parents mentioned relationship break ups as being distressing for their children:

In another home, cleaning had been done specially in preparation for our visit:

Extract 13

As we enter the house, there is a strong smell of bleach. The mother says she has been cleaning up ready for our visit. The child is sitting watching Sky TV. The sofas and carpets are threadbare. Half of the living room has been vacuumed and there is furniture polish left out. The rest of the room has not been cleaned. We are shown through into a rear room that contains a table, chairs, an old washing machine, gym equipment, a lawnmower, a Christmas tree, a fishing

rod, a rocking horse, a tractor and a dresser with clothes and bedding spilling out of it. The floor is covered in food droppings (2004-2005).

There were a very small number of exceptions to these similarities between the white families. One family in the next town was the only one where religion appeared significant:

Extract 14

We enter a very well decorated small terraced house up very steep steps. The furniture is new and there is a lot of pine. There is a television, video recorder, DVD player, hi-fi, videos, DVDs and CDs. There are a lot of books on the pine shelves, which are mostly for reference and on a wide range of subjects. There are eight bibles on the shelves, crosses on the doors and a tee-shirt hanging up that says 'Jesus Loves Me' (2004-2005).

The other exception was one where:

Extract 15

We enter a large terraced house up steep steps. The house is well decorated and comfortably furnished. The living room full of toys – a wooden train track takes up most of floor. There is a large wooden dolls house in a corner. The family have a computer and internet access.

Mum says her daughter is girly: she likes dolls, prams, tea parties etc. She has also been trying to write letters and numbers 'because she only just missed going to school'

Mum asks what she will be learning at nursery and says she wants her to improve her social skills, especially sharing, and to be able to write her own name (2004-2005).

In 2005-2006, just over half of the families lived in challenging circumstances:

Extract 16

The house is close to nursery with an untended small front garden. We enter the house directly into the living room. It has a laminate floor and pale leather sofas which are not terribly clean. James' older brother from last year (Laurence) says to me 'I have four bedrooms and a TV me' and James repeats this later on. The living room also has cable TV but there are very few other signs of possessions. Mum appears to find it difficult to concentrate on the questions that SH is asking her as she constantly replies to her friends' texts. When asked she says that they do not have a computer at home 'but I'm going to get one'. When asked what she would like Jack to learn at nursery, mum is unsure and says 'I don't know – reading – he's good at drawing though'. SH explains that reading is not taught formally. Mum asks when the local primary school term starts – she says she doesn't know when Laurence starts school and that she doesn't have any friends to find out from. When we say we are leaving she is texting and appears not to notice when we leave (2005-2006).

The rest of the families of white-indigenous heritage were experiencing less deprivation. These families were clearer about their children's likes and dislikes and about what to expect of nursery education:

Before we arrive, ST and SH say that this is a young mother who has 'really come on'. She's 'a bit different'.

The front garden has mattresses and a lot of other rubbish in it. A man comes rushing towards us from a recycling lorry, asking what we are doing and saying he lives there. Then he recognises us and calms down. We are shown inside and through to the back of the house. There are French doors looking out to a large garden with a huge trampoline and slide and a path with bright crazy paving going down to a play house with tropical-style plants surrounding it. There is a lawn with a border down one side. Jacob has been cleaning the windows. There are numerous cats, rabbits and guinea pigs.

There is a green three seater sofa and a two seater sofa on a green and red carpet. There is also a large TV. There are cushions and bedding by the door and photos of older children. There are also toys on the coffee table in front of the TV ... Mum says she wants him to learn 'everything there is to learn really'

As we leave, ST says that the house isn't very clean but you can see that the baby is very happy and that Jacob is really well brought up – he has been really listened to and talked with (2005-2006).

In another case,

Extract 17

We approach a semi-detached house with a very well tended front garden that the mother is working in when we arrive. They have been away and she is 'getting it back to what it was'. She shows us through the kitchen to the back room. The older children are in the garden with Eliza and her dad. ... Eliza is eating a lolly but is told to leave this until we have gone.... They decide we should talk in the front room where there are two and three seater black leather sofas. There is a coffee table and a fire place with fireguard and a largish video camera on top. The walls are pale with a deeper colour on the

chimney breast. There is a large TV, a DVD and a video. There are photographs of the older children on the sideboard.... Mum is a part-time teaching assistant in the next town, dad is a media lecturer at a local further education college.' Her father gives her likes as running in circles, picking pea pods, climbing, paints, gluing and sticking. He says she is good at drawing, articulate, has a wide vocabulary and likes reading. He says that if she has the chance to learn letters and numbers all well and good. SH says that they do not sit down and do this formally and dad says this is fine 'it's not your focus is it?' SH says that it is not that they don't do it, just that they don't do it formally (2005-2006).

Dress

Another element that appeared important to note during the visits was the way in which the children and adults were dressed. In the homes of the families of white indigenous-heritage, all of the mothers were dressed in casual clothes and wore jeans. In all the homes of families of Pakistani-heritage, the mothers were dressed in traditional salwar kameez. There were differences in the style and quality of these: the poorer the family, the more likely they were to be dressed in plain and what appeared to be less expensive and more modest clothes. When bringing their children to the nursery, the wearing of the jilbab or burkha (variations on a loose full length gown covering the face, head and body) increased over the period of the study. The more affluent mothers appeared to have clothes in richer fabrics and they spoke better English.

The children of white-indigenous origin wore unremarkable Western clothes. The clothes worn by boys of Pakistani-heritage were usually Western in style except in the poorer homes where they often dressed in salwar kameez and sometimes wore jewellery. In almost all the homes, the girls were traditionally dressed in salwar kameez and often wore bangles.

Aspirations

On all of the visits that we carried out we asked the parents what they hoped their children would gain from going to nursery. The majority of parents said that they hoped that their children would make friends and be happy. Amongst the parents of Pakistani-heritage, when asked what they wanted their children to learn at nursery, very few found this easy to answer. Answers given were that they wanted the children to 'learn good things', to learn 'the basics', 'learn activity and her speech', 'learn how to share toys', 'everything you can teach him really'

About half of the parents of Pakistani-heritage said that they wanted their children to learn more English. A small number of parents said that they hoped that their children would behave better and be 'less fussy eaters'. One mother mentioned that she had been attending the local FE college and stressed that Michelle had had a good grounding at private nursery and that she had 'reached her targets' and so didn't have any particular hopes for what she would learn.

APPENDIX 2:
Ethnography from
Staff – Parent Conferences

Purpose of the Staff – Parent Conferences

The staff – parent conferences were offered to parents as an opportunity for them to discuss how the children had adjusted to nursery after their first two months. In reality, even where parents had booked appointments, many did not attend and I was able to be present at the interviews with only half my sample group. They did, however, provide some opportunity for me to learn from parents how they perceived their children's adjustment to the environment of the nursery school and also for me to share some of my observations of the children.

Significant Findings

Most of the parents of Pakistani-heritage commented that their children were speaking much more English at home. A common interest and concern of the parents was whether or not the children had made friends. One of the parents of Pakistani-heritage said that her son said that one of the white boys was his friend but there was actually little evidence of this from observations or staff experience. A number of the parents commented that their children talked of eating a variety of different foods at nursery but that they were still 'picky eaters' at home. Some parents commented that they were concerned that, since they started nursery, their children have started swearing in Punjabi.

First Year of Data Collection (2004 – 2005)

I discussed with the mother of the white girl the way in which she was very nervous of me. Her mum said she was like this with all men, especially if they had facial hair (which I have not). Mum said that she got very upset about seeing her doctor because of this. She said that she was also very fearful of her uncle who had a very full beard and that she hid in the corner of the room when he visited at the

week-end. She said that it seemed strange because her father was a very gentle man. She commented that her daughter was enjoying nursery, except for construction work, and that she had not seemed in any way concerned about attending on the occasions when I had been there.

The parents of the white boy (Mitchell) from the next town spent a great deal longer seeing the teacher than any of the other parents. His father was more concerned to tell us about his son than to hear from the teacher. He kept saying 'oh he's lovely'. His parents said he had become more mischievous since starting nursery – for example, he carried on doing things when asked to stop. They talked of how adult he was – for example, when his 12 year old sister was upset during a car journey, he had said to his dad, 'just ignore her she's only a child'. His father talked of taking him to the circus and him being mesmerised by a female trapeze artist who he said was very attractive. His dad said that at the curtain call Mitchell had said 'wow' when she stood in front of him and then said 'if mum keeps going to keep fit will she look like that?' The father also talked about a plane crash that the son had seen on television and how he came to find him to tell him how sad it was. He said that as he went back to the kitchen, his son then said, 'no come on, let's pray'. I talked about the way that he always came to spend time with me in nursery when I was there. They said that he had not talked about me being there and, in fact, was not always terribly happy at nursery and he said that the children called him a prat! This was something that the staff had not heard the children say to him but it was true that he did not appear to have any real friends at nursery – though a mother of Pakistani-heritage said that her son thought he was his friend. His parents commented that, outside of nursery, all his friends were much older.

One of the parent conferences focused very much on the parents' priorities. The teacher discussed with them how it had come about

that their daughter started nursery with considerable literacy and numeracy skills but still in nappies. The teacher commented that twelve of the children started nursery in nappies – more than ever before. The father said it was the result of the demise of the Asian extended family and that in the nuclear groups all the knowledge about childcare had been lost. Discussion moved on to the way that she played mainly alone but that academically she was extremely able. The father denied this and said her older brother was much more able in mathematics but the teacher said that she had not found this to be the case. Later she commented that it seemed strangely at odds with the belief the parents had last year that the brother was not making good progress and had special educational needs. The teacher mentioned that the daughter had talked about Ramadan. The father smiled and said this was good to know. The teacher talked about the need for the daughter to engage in more creative activities and the parents said they would draw up an action plan to target this.

In the case of one child of Pakistani-heritage whose father has left them, the teacher said they had been doing a lot of work on family relationships because the child seemed very mixed up and thought she had two sisters (who were actually her aunts) and she called her granddad her dad. The mother said this was because she called them by the same names that she used. The mother's sisters were in their early teens and the child thought of them as her sisters. The mother said that they 'could not be a family with just two and the others matter' as part of the family. The teacher said that she knew that extended families were important but that the child must understand how she was related to them properly – this was a key part of her identity. The mother seemed very unsure about all of this and not terribly happy. After the parent had left, I talked to the teacher and she indicated that she was trying to be helpful to me by ensuring that the children were able to talk to me about their families

because this was important to their sense of identity. She talked to me about her own interest in completing a doctorate.

One white mother was very concerned to tell us that she had tried to bring her daughter up how she remembered her dad bringing her up. She talked about how they went to the park, blackberry picking and conker collecting. She also commented that her daughter's concentration span had increased greatly since she started nursery and that she had been able to watch a two hour Spiderman video.

One father commented that his daughter had refused to speak Punjabi at home since starting nursery. I asked him how he felt about this. He said he was not worried because she needed to be able to speak English for school and she would have to speak Punjabi to her grandmothers because there was no choice. The teacher talked about the importance of maintaining her first language for progress generally and for her sense of who she is. The father said it would be fine – she could learn it again later.

Second Year of Data Collection (2005-2006)

In the second year of data collection, one mother said that she had been very struck by the way that her son talked about his friends at home. He talked about both boys and girls and both 'whites and Asians'. The mother herself was Irish and said it was important to get along with lots of different people in life.

The mothers of three cousins asked for an appointment to come together. The oldest mother was dressed like most of the local Muslim women. The other two mothers were both wearing Calvin Klein hijabs. The youngest of the mothers was the one who paid most attention to covering her head and arms. The mothers talked about the girl crying all the time and saying she had pains. The teacher said that she ran round after the boys – getting their coats for them for example. The mothers smiled and said this was what

happened at home. The teacher talked about the importance of the boys becoming more independent and of the girl seeing a role for herself that was not just about running after the boys. The younger mothers laughed but the oldest looked uncertain – they translated for her all the time. The teacher said that she was being serious. The mothers said they mollycoddled the boys and the girl did too. The mothers said that the boys got angry at home if they were told off but this did not happen at nursery. They said that they had started swearing in English if told off or told not to do something. The oldest mother said that she wanted them all to be in the same class at primary school. The teacher asked why they wanted them to be together – they would learn new skills and get new friends if were not always together. One of the mothers said she was speaking for all of them but had no real reason other than that they learned better that way. The teacher commented that they spent so much time together and ate together in the evenings and so a change might be good for them. The same mother just repeated that they wanted them to all be together.

At the staff-parent conferences later in the year, the mother of a boy of white indigenous heritage said he liked playing with most children. He was really upset when footballers came and he didn't want to play. She said he had been to football school with older children and that also really upset him. She said occasionally he could be really rude, using a lot of bad language. She said perhaps it was his age. She said he really enjoyed everything about nursery. ST said he had good understanding of the world around – weather, growth, etc. and that he had a wider range of friends now.

A boy of Pakistani-heritage (Tahir) had been to Pakistan but settled back into nursery very quickly. He played with others (boys of Pakistani-heritage) and liked adult attention. ST said he had become better at sharing. He knew the names of other children well in story time and could retell the story of the Three Bears in Punjabi.

He could write the first letter of his name and make letters with Toolo. He liked to make shapes and knew their names. Sometimes he chose adult attention and sometimes children's. Mum talked about getting him to read books and do jigsaws. She was dressed in a brightly coloured salwar kemise. Mum asked about his behaviour. She said he was very helpful at home and looked after his younger sisters (16 months) and carried them up and down stairs. ST and I were a little taken aback by this. Whilst seeing a boy in a caring role might be seen as positive, it raised questions about whether there were cultural differences in childrearing practices here or whether the mother simply had not thought of the dangers. Mum was very concerned about whether he spoke English at nursery but was assured that he did.

A girl of Pakistani-heritage (Simah) who stood back and watched and would not speak to anyone when she started nursery was now choosing what she wanted to do. Mum was surprised that she had carried out a survey. ST said that she was becoming more confident in speaking out at nursery and her mum said that she was very confident at home and spoke Punjabi to her dad who spoke little English and English to her mum who was more fluent in English. ST said that she watched other children and sometimes carried out some of the activities. Mum was worried that Simah did not have particular friends and asked if this was normal but said she loved coming. ST said she sang and danced and was really good with following the keep fit video – mum said she was saying nothing!.

A girl of Pakistani-heritage (Mehrnaz) was playing with other children more now but she spent quite a bit of time 'wandering'. She got very tired before the morning was over. Mum said she woke up early and was very lively. She hardly ate at home but ST said she was doing better at nursery. ST said that she was good at maths and thought this was mum's influence (she was training to be a secondary school

maths teacher) but mum said it was the nursery's. ST said that she knew some letters of the alphabet.

SH said that a girl of white-indigenous heritage (Neila) had a period when she just followed around one of the other children and did whatever she said but she had stopped doing this now. She spent quite a lot of time with a boy of white-indigenous heritage (Jake). She was beginning to write some names and she retold stories using voices and added details heard in story time. She spoke in sentences but her speech was indistinct. This was common in the family but SH suggested writing to the speech therapist. Mum said that she still used some baby talk at home.

The mother of a girl of Pakistani-heritage (Isra) said she had been worried that she did not have any friends. SH said this was not unusual at this age and not to worry. She still looked for SH when she went outside but was less dependant on her indoors now. Mum said that she spoke about Neila a lot – SH was surprised by this. SH said she liked telling stories. Mum said 'Oh God yes – she's read the 3 bears 150 times I think – she does all the voices'. Mum said she was not at all quiet at home and so worried about her at nursery – she spent a lot of time standing watching. SH said it was active observation and gave her the confidence to try things later. Mum said that she liked to pick her own clothes to wear. She did it the night before and told SH when she did not like what she was wearing – she told her that her fleece was like baby clothes. SH asked how she would be about wearing school uniform but mum said she was looking forward to wearing it. Her mum said that her brother was not looking forward to her going to the same school and said he would not play with her. Mum said she was very inquisitive and asked lots of questions about what she saw on TV.

The mother of a boy of Pakistani-heritage (Nawaz) told Shahdiya, in Punjabi, that some days he was happy to come to nursery but other

days he said 'teacher smacks me'. SH stressed that this did not happen – but mum said she knew that and that it was just an excuse. SH thought he was happy now but mum said he complained of a tummy ache most days when he left for nursery. He spoke in full sentences in English and mum said he spoke English with his sister at home. Shahdiya read all the curriculum comments to mum in Punjabi in a formal manner with no discussion. Mum said nothing and asked nothing. SH said he was really good at construction and asked if he talked about his models at home. Mum looked doubtful but said sometimes. SH said he was very friendly with Haseen and that they would be in the same class at school. Mum knew Haseen and said Nazan said he was his friend. Mum went to look at his record of achievement with him and he was very upset.

The mother of a boy of Pakistani-heritage (Haseen) said he enjoyed coming to nursery now. She said he was eating more at home and SH said he was starting to try crisps as well as fruit during snack. Mum said she was pleased that Haseen and Nawaz were to be in same class at school. SH said he remembered stories word for word and he was very good at calculating. She said he noticed details in books and in the world around. She commented that he did not do a lot of painting or drawing but he wanted to fill his record of achievement now and so had been doing much more. Mum did not ask or say very much.

The mother of a girl of Pakistani-heritage (Sairah) was concerned because she had been unwell and now kept wetting herself without knowing she had done it. Mum knew that she liked creative activities best and encouraged this at home – she had been allowed to draw all over the walls at home whilst waiting for them to be decorated. She liked very hands on activities. SH said she lost concentration in story times sometimes but thought it was because she was run down.

APPENDIX 3:

**Ethnography of Autumn Term
Visits
in 2004 and 2005**

Organisation and Routines

Both indoor and outdoor areas were available to the children continuously throughout the week and the children chose where they wanted to play. The two main staff teams (a teacher and a nursery nurse in each) spent a block of time based in and responsible for the creative area and then another based in and responsible for the rest of the nursery. The play areas were set up with a wide selection of materials which were continuously available and which the children selected and replaced themselves. In each main area, one adult was 'based' with particular 'focused' activities, which the children were expected to carry out when asked to do so, and the other adult joined the children in their chosen activities.

The nursery doors were open for the first half hour of the session, after which they were locked and entry was via a security system. When the children arrived, they were brought into the nursery by their parents. They hung up their coats and collected a self registration card with a picture and their name on and placed this on to one of two registration boards (representing the two main staff teams) that hung in the entrance area. The staff greeted the children as they came into the nursery. Where parents had concerns, they spoke to whichever member of staff was responsible for their child but many of the parents of Pakistani-heritage spoke to the bilingual staff. These concerns were often about making sure that the children wore aprons and often about toileting. One mother was concerned that her son was shown where to go to the toilet and he was reminded to go. The parents of white indigenous children often spoke to the parents of similar children and the parents of children of Pakistani-heritage also spoke to each other but it was very rare that the two groups of parents spoke to each other.

The children could choose what they wanted to do (of which more later) but the play activities were interrupted in the middle of each

session when the children were required to go to 'group time'. This consisted of a sugar-free snack and milk, a story, conversation and some early literacy and numeracy work. The children were in the same group of about ten or twelve each day with the same adult. The groups were organised broadly in terms of English language fluency but the bilingual nursery nurses joined all of the groups on a rota basis when stories were read in both English and Punjabi. A teacher and a nursery nurse funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (but neither of whom spoke Punjabi) took a group which had been identified as requiring particular support with English.

Indoor Play Area

The nursery was one large open plan area but had formerly been two separate classrooms, one large and one small. There were three small group rooms, created from former cupboards, around the periphery of the area. The open plan area was organised into permanent activity areas, which were separated by storage units. What was previously the large classroom incorporated a book area, a writing area, mathematics area, a home corner, a separate role play area, a computer area, a sand tray, a Belfast sink for water play, a construction area and a small world play area. The book area included a wide range of books in a book trolley, including some dual language texts and a comfortable sofa.

The writing area included paper in different sizes, clipboards, different pens and pencils and a range of stationery. It also included examples of English letters displayed on a board. Unlike when I had been the head teacher, ten years before, the Urdu alphabet was not also represented but there were signs in Urdu that one of the bilingual nursery nurses said stated 'come and write' and 'we can write'. There were no such signs in English.

The mathematics area contained plastic numbers, timers, jigsaws, tiles and mats, threading, cotton reels, equipment to sort and classify, such as miniature toy bears, dinosaurs and vehicles, shapes and magnet boards. The area was only occupied by any children when an adult was present who directed their activities.

The home corner contained a table with four chairs, an ironing board and iron, a high chair and black (not South-Asian) baby, a washing machine, cooker, kettle, breadbin, four cups, saucers, bowls and mugs, a dustpan and brush, a toaster, cans of beans, spaghetti bolognaise, and skipjack tuna, a packet of Bisto and espresso coffee.

The small world and construction area contained roadway carpet tiles, cars of different sizes, wooden and plastic bricks of different sizes, large planks and play people, most of whom were white. There were also clipboards, paper and pens.

Storage units were located next to the sand and water trays and these included silhouetted spaces for measuring and pouring equipment.

What was previously the small classroom contained a creative / workshop area, another Belfast sink for water play and a domestic – style kitchen area at one end with adult sized units and furniture, together with a fridge and cooker on one side, separated by a gate from the children's kitchen area at the other with child-sized cupboards and furniture. The creative area included two easels, tables and storage units which contained coloured pencils, felt tips, glue sticks, scissors, boxes (turned inside out), tubes, matchsticks, lollipop-sticks, glue pots, paint pots and brushes, printing equipment and paper of different sizes, shapes, colours and textures. Trays were set up with paint mixing kits and there was also string, adhesive tape and plastic glue pots. All of the equipment was labelled in English and there were some picture labels.

All of this 'messy area' had a blue vinyl safety floor covering, whilst what was previously the larger classroom has green carpet along the entrance side, with a swathe of yellow carpet in front of this and then more of the blue vinyl safety flooring where the sink and sand play were located. This flooring had been installed ten years ago when I was the head teacher and when the nursery was remodelled. The architect explained that the green was shrubbery / sand dunes, the yellow was a tropical beach of perfect yellow sand and the blue was the sea. The blue area was to have fish cut outs placed in it. Feeling that this was less than appropriate to a mill town, the best compromise that could be reached was to change the carpet to a yellow more consistent with a British beach and to have blue flooring but no fish.

During the Autumn Term of the second year of data collection, the nursery was redecorated. The creative and wet areas then had lilac speckled vinyl flooring and the rest of the area had light green carpet. New internal natural wooden doors were fitted and new green external doors. There were new blinds in a darker green than previously. The display boards were all in shades of silver, lilac and purple.

In both years of data collection, most of the children came in readily but there were a number of occasions when some children of Pakistani-heritage remained on the fringes. In 2004-2005, on one occasion, around half a dozen boys of Pakistani-heritage came into the nursery and just stood inside and watched. During these early visits, a group of boys of white indigenous heritage followed me around the nursery, seeking my attention at every opportunity. As the days pass, these boys were less interested but were replaced by a group of boys of Pakistani-heritage who often stood close to and gazed at me. Adeem (who had gazed at me on the home visit) followed me around quite a lot of the time. He played with the bricks for a while but mainly he was looking at me and holding on to a plank

that he swung around with little awareness of hitting other children. I went outside and Adeem came too. He wanted a bike and went straight to take one from another child and I had to explain that he needed to get a timer for which ever bike he wanted and wait his turn. He appeared not to understand me but he nodded. When the timer had finished he came to find me and showed me it and went to get the bike from the other child.

When a male student was on work experience, the children behaved in a similar way towards him. Israail followed the male student around and chose activities on the basis of what the student suggested. He suggested painting but three times Israail started to draw. Each time he was told 'no that's drawing – don't you want to paint? Go on – do a large smiley face'. Israail painted two blue circles – 'oh look two eyes' said the student 'I'll do the mouth' 'Now the ears..' Israail lost interest and took his apron off.

In 2005-2006, on one occasion, a boy of Pakistan-heritage and girl of Pakistani-heritage did not choose anything to do and stood looking at me, shaking their heads. During a later visit, Afroze spent most of the session alone. She went to the water cooler and put her head under it to drink directly from the tap. The rest of the time she stood and watched or held a doll. One girl of Pakistani-heritage sat alone in the writing area with a piece of yellow paper watching me. With encouragement she got a pen – it was clear that she wanted to draw but seemed very unsure about what she should do or whether she was allowed to. In 2005-2006, a number of boys of Pakistani-heritage again gazed at me and kept looking back as they went off to do other things.

Where children of Pakistani-heritage were hesitant, they often spoke little English and sought attention from the bilingual staff. In 2004–2005, Sumayya was anxious about joining in many of the activities but on one occasion was called across to do some hand printing by

Fareeha. At first she spoke to him in English but he did not understand and so she switched to Punjabi. It was not clear that he understood still. She tried to explain about washing his hands in English and then in Punjabi but he seemed not to know what to do. Fareeha moved on to the next child. Sumayya was not able to dry his hand and was left with a wet hand looking worried and confused. He went inside and went down the corridor to the nursery entrance. He stood looking out of the window until he was called for story time. In 2005-2006, Simah found it difficult to understand what to do with the glue and used it like paint. Shadmani switched between English and Punjabi but Simah seemed to repeat what she said. Shadmani said she could not understand what Simah said.

Another response where children of Pakistani-heritage were hesitant, and had relatives who were also attending, was to stay close by them. Very often, girls of Pakistani-heritage were more confident than boys of Pakistani-heritage. In one such case, Sumaytah started to blow bubbles and Sumayya watched her for a while but then blew some of his own. She moved to the mark making and chose a black felt tip. He tried to stay near Sumaytah. She looked around but did not actually draw anything. Sumayya chose a grey felt tip and some cream paper and started to draw. Sumaytah went across to the bikes and waited with a timer and Sumayya followed her.

Outdoor Play Area

The blue area along the edge of the play area led out through two sets of double doors to the outdoor play area. One set of doors was located in what was originally the smaller classroom (now the creative area) and the other in what was previously the larger classroom. The outdoor area was also organised into areas. Outside the creative area was an area of safety surface which was permanently set up with a green plastic climbing frame with climbing

ramp, two nets, slide and tunnel. The climbing frame was moved inside at night. The climbing frame was most used by both boys and girls of Pakistani-heritage. The children played mostly in single sex groups. Frequently white-indigenous and children of Pakistani-heritage played along side each other but they rarely interacted. In the corner of this area, in an area of steep grass banking, there was a fixed climbing and platform area made of wood that included a pulley system and chutes.

This area was divided from the rest of the outdoor area by a line of tables, cupboards and equipment. There were bubble blowers in different shapes on one table, paper and pens on another, construction equipment on another. There was also a water station with tanks of different sizes, filled with purple coloured water. There was also a bucket on a pulley and some tubing.

There was then an area that included bikes, scooters, carts and prams. The tarmac was painted as a road way with parking spaces (including one disabled space), junctions, crossing places and roundabouts. A system of sand timers governed who could go on the bikes and scooters and for how long. On the steep grass banking behind this area and next to the main approach and entrance to the nursery there was a permanently fixed wooden playhouse reached by steps.

Beyond the bike and scooter area was a sandpit, which was separated from the rest of the area by a picket fence. On one of my visits in 2005-2006, the sandpit had three containers of ten buckets, spades and rakes. Two girls of Pakistani-heritage, three boys of Pakistani-heritage and two white boys played there. The children were all digging holes and some of them raked the sand. None of the children made much contact with the others – they dug their own holes and only talked to each other if they got in each others way. One child complained that her spade had been taken by another. Atifah was playing with Nuala and she told her to be careful near the

hole. She said they must not fall in the hole because they would not be able to get out (the hole was actually comparatively small). She tried to tell Abu to be careful but he did not understand. I asked if she could tell him in Punjabi but she said 'I don't know Punjabi' and I remembered that she spoke Kutchi at home. Shadmani tried to get the children of Pakistani-heritage who were not joining in to do so. One boy did not like the sand and didn't want to go in the sandpit, hold a spade or a bucket. She suggested making a mountain and switched between Punjabi and English, emphasizing 'a big mountain' in both English and Punjabi. Once she had gone, he eventually got into the sandpit and started to dig but then he saw another bilingual member of staff come outside and went to her.

A boy of white-indigenous heritage dominated the play both indoors and out. He came in and came up to me and said 'Oh it's you again'. He came back to me at regular intervals and asked if I wanted a ride on his scooter but he would not let any one else take a turn. Later in the afternoon he came up to me, put his thumbs up and said 'Hiya'. He was riding a Barbie scooter and a two year old from Offsprings told him it was for girls. Brian said any one could ride it. The two year old then rode up to him on a red scooter and suggested they swap and he agreed. LP came past and said he had to dominate everyone and have them look at what he was doing and she could see that he would be robbing by the time he was 14.

Two boys of Pakistani-heritage (Sa'dan and Lut) just sat on the back of the bikes waiting to be driven around. GW said they were lazy and wanted everything to be done for them and that it was sad that they looked so unhappy. They refused to try the snack yoghurt later and sat appearing to sulk.

A boy of Pakistani-heritage came up to me on a bike and tried to tell me something but it was not clear which language he was speaking

and I did not understand what he said. He persisted but without success.

A little later, a boy of white-indigenous heritage (Sean) was crying and a boy of Pakistani-heritage walked half way across the outdoor area and past several other members of staff to get me to go to him. He said he wanted his dad and SH asked if he would help her because she needed 'strong boys'. His dad came to collect him later and spent a long time looking at the pictures he had done. When he had looked at them and talked about them he said 'come on mate' and they left holding hands.

The Focused Activity

The main focused activity for the September week was hand painting. The children who had settled into nursery most readily were the ones who were most keen to carry out the activity. Hand painting appeared to be more popular with the girls than the boys and generally the white-indigenous children were happier to have their hands covered in paint than the children of Pakistani-heritage, though one girl of Pakistani-heritage was very excited in deed and continued to paint and print her own hand for several days after the focused activity. The children who were least keen to carry out the activity were those who were least happy at nursery. In some cases, it seemed that the reason for the children's unwillingness was a lack of understanding about what they were being asked to do. In the case of one boy, in 2004-2005, he tried very hard to keep his hand under the table but was eventually persuaded to have his hand painted and he appeared to like the result once he had made a print. This persuasion was carried out in Punjabi but even in Punjabi he struggled to understand what he was being asked to do. When he was then asked to go to wash his hands (also in Punjabi) it became clear that he simply did not know how to wash his hands by himself.

Group Time

The small group times were generally more successful when conducted in both English and Punjabi, even where the children were reasonably fluent in English. In one group time, only the white boy present appeared able to understand the story. The other children paid a great deal more attention to the snack than to the book and when they were asked questions about the food in the book, they answered with comments about the snack food. This led to the white boy answering most of the questions and the children of Pakistani-heritage not understanding what the story was about. The lack of possible conversation with the Punjabi-speaking children seemed to open a space for the white child to dominate and amuse. He asked the nursery nurse if she had any children and if she lived alone. She explained that she was married and lived with her husband. He then told her that his mum and dad got married and he went to the wedding and wore a suit.

In 2005-2006, when reading the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the white-indigenous children joined in with the actions but the children of Pakistani-heritage did not. The white children joined in with the counting as a group but the children of Pakistani-heritage did not. They did, however, count when asked to do so individually. By contrast, when the story was read in Punjabi, the children responded very differently. Whilst the story was read and questions asked in Punjabi, many of the children answered in English – this was true in both years of data collection. The pictures posed some interesting challenges for the children, particularly in 2004-2005: on one occasion, whilst the small number of white-indigenous children recognised the stereotypical portrayal of a piece of cheese, the children of Pakistani-heritage thought it was a sandwich. There was another occasion where the characters were in a shed but the children of Pakistani-heritage thought it was a bathroom. On this occasion, however, the children of Pakistani-heritage did understand

the main focus of the story. When the story was told in Punjabi some of white children ceased to listen and talked to each other about the birthday cards behind them on the wall. Some of children of Pakistani-heritage asked for some warm milk from a bottle. Adnaan says he couldn't bite the apple that he had chosen because it was too hard – he had done this yesterday. Shadmani said some of them would not have had solid food at home.

In 2005-2006, a girl of Pakistani-heritage (Sadaf) who was normally happy and confident, started to cry and we could not find out why. After Fareeha had talked to her, it was thought it was because she needed her inhaler and then she was fine. She smiled at me and giggled at regular intervals – she later did this with other staff when she went to play outside. The following day, I went into group time and sat in the corner opposite ST. ST went out because a child was missing and Sadaf started to cry as she did yesterday. She went to Shadmani and was given her inhaler but she said she was crying because of me. ST asked me to go out of the room to see what happened and she stopped. I decided to go to another group time though ST said we shouldn't have given in because she got her own way. In the afternoon story time the following day Sadaf started to cry again and refused to go into the story room. She was told in English and Punjabi that I wouldn't be going in. Eventually she stopped and went in. After story she again smiled at me when she came out.

At the group time the next morning, there was a big and normal sized book of 'Where's Spot'. The children were very excited about the story and all said they wanted the big book except for Gee. Myra said she would read the little book outside afterwards. Many of the children of Pakistani-heritage did not respond even when the story and questions were in Punjabi. Zain showed little interest and talked about finishing his milk. Later he became vocal and animated when it was time to leave the story room. All the children except for Sairah

joined in with the crocodile snapping. They got very excited about lifting the flaps. Gee, Melanie & Myra clapped when Spot was found.

At singing time, a number of children were tentative about doing the actions to begin with, particularly the boys, but they did join in after a while. Some boys of Pakistani-heritage talked to each other and grasped each other around the neck. The younger and more timid children whether white or of Pakistani-heritage tended to join in less. Generally the boys, whether white or of Pakistani-heritage, were the ones who make the most vigorous actions.

Observing the Children's Play Later in the Autumn Term

When I return later in the Autumn Term, very little has changed in the layout and organisation of the nursery since I was last here. The only real change was a slight re-siting of the role play area to make a clearer distinction between the kitchen and the bedroom area. A very frilly white and pink cot had been added to the bedroom. A prayer mat had also been added. Displays included one joint collage, individual paintings, collages and a small number of drawings. The day began wet and so the outdoor area was not in use. Later it cleared up briefly and the children went outside but it soon rained again – they went in and out a few times like this between the showers.

Most of the children were now spending more time playing with other children. In both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, the boys who had spent time with me previously smiled at me when they arrived but most of them did not follow me around in the way that they had done previously. In 2005-2006, however, Sad'an, went to the painting area and looked at me as he got his paper. He kept looking at me, rather than at what he was doing and dropped his paper. He kept looking at me as he tried to put his apron on. He put paper on the easel and

got a brush, holding it at the very end and wiping it on the side of the pot. He painted a green area in middle of paper. He watched me as I went to the brick area. He then took his apron off and took his picture from the easel and put it to dry. He followed me to the bricks, gazing at me all the while. He wanted me to build with him which I did whilst trying to observe other children. I stopped helping him and he got a large fire engine and crashed it into me.

A number of the children continued to be slow to settle to any of the activities. In 2004-2005, for example, Adeem smiled at me when he came into the nursery but did not come over to me as he had previously. For a long time he did not settle to any particular activity and walked around with a mobile phone but did not actually speak into it. After about 20 minutes he joined Sean and girl of Pakistani-heritage at the computer but did not speak to them. Sean told him that he loved him several times. Adeem frowned and moved away. He looked at a book on the floor by the computer and then moved over to the storyboard alone. He played with the characters and listened to J.P. as she read a story to another child. When she said 'I like carrots' he echoed her. He then moved to the bedroom area and picked up the prayer mat. He held it out in front of him, looking at it closely. He tried to show it to Sean but Sean went outside. Adeem dropped it in the door way.

In 2005-2006, one of the boys who was slow to settle to the activities was Ziyad. He was with a group of other boys of Pakistani-heritage who were running up and down the corridor. He was not happy with them because they were running and repeatedly told them to stop in English. The boys were speaking Punjabi and ignored him. He did not settle to any of the activities and remained alone but stood and watched the other children and the activities that were going on – particularly at the computer. After 20 minutes or so he told me he was going to play with the sand – which he did. He became

concerned about the sand going on the floor because 'they are not being careful'

Subsequently, I spoke to G.W. about the running and she said they often did this and so they had started putting activities in the corridor in the hope of stopping them running but with only limited success. I remembered that this was something that the boys of Pakistani-heritage did when I worked there.

In 2004-2005, Israail came in looking very unsure. He saw and clearly recognised me and immediately went to get a camera, remembering when I had given the children cameras on a previous occasion. He and another boy of Pakistani-heritage went and sat with the camera at a table in the writing area. They slumped over it. They did not speak. They did not do anything. After a while S.T. came along 'nay boys what are you doing? Now that's very sad the pair of you sitting there'. She told them to find something to play with. They wandered off but still did not settle to anything. She then went off to tell some other staff what she had seen. Israail later played with the sand and kept telling ST what he had found buried in it. He had very little contact with the other children. Once S.T. had left the sand, Israail left and went to play with a white girl in the home corner. He spoke to her though he did not talk to any of the boys in the sand.

Where the children of Pakistani-heritage were uncertain, they continued to rely on other family members such as cousins. In 2004-2005, Farazah was upset for several days and stayed close to her cousin. On one occasion, Farazah did a collage whilst her cousin did a painting. A girl of white indigenous heritage sat next to them but there was no interaction between them. Farazah was upset when separated from J.P. and left with L.P, who took her outside.. She was told to stop making such a noise. She then went back inside with J.P. and played at the water tray with her cousin. She continued

to whimper but held out the container to me and then stopped crying as I talked to her.

The friendship groups remained largely same–gender and there were very few examples of children of white-indigenous and Pakistani-heritage playing together. Where there were mixed gender and mixed race groups they are almost always playing alongside rather than with each other. Interaction between them remained concerned largely with disputes over equipment. Two girls of Pakistani-heritage spent large amounts of time in the home corner and tried to prevent other children going in. They particularly attempted to ensure that boys did not play there.

In both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, generally there were more children playing together than previously but this was not consistent across the different days that I visited. In the main and in the case of the children of Pakistani–heritage, more, particularly the boys, were now speaking Punjabi to each other. It remained the case that when they were giving instructions or were concerned about the behaviour of others, they spoke English. On other occasions, very few of the children interacted with each other or with an adult. When they did they called ‘teacher’ and it was usually to say that one of the other children was doing something they thought they shouldn’t be. Interaction in the course of activities was mostly when staff went to the children. Some Punjabi–speaking children did seek contact with Punjabi–speaking staff.

Where the children did play together, they tended to play with other children with the same skin colour and generally of the same sex. In 2005-2006, Mitchell and Bradley, for example, played together with some other white boys with the fire engines. They did not, however, interact with the boys of Pakistani-heritage who were also there. Mitchell had been playing here since he first came in – he waved at me and then went straight there. Bradley came in and sought SH to

have a story. Bradley and Mitchell later moved to the brown sand in the black tray with sieves together. They said very little to each other or to the other children who were playing there – who were of Pakistani-heritage. They argued with the children of Pakistani-heritage over the equipment and Bradley and Mitchell left.

Mitchell went to the painting easel and got some paper and put it on the easel. He got a pencil to write his name on the picture but said he could not remember how to do it. I said I could not either and he said he might be able to do the first three letters. He did a good approximation and I told him it looked right to me. He told S.H. he was painting a tree with a leaf falling off. He said he was going to paint a blue squirrel and laughed. His paint started to run and this upset him. S.H. showed him how to wipe his brush. Bradley arrived in the painting area and started to paint directly on to the easel. S.H. asked him what he has forgotten but he didn't know. He wrote his own name on his picture using a mock cursive script.

On a small number of occasions, the children of Pakistani-heritage appeared more confident. During one visit, in 2005-2006, Mashkoor smiled at me as soon as she came into the room. She went to the sand with a boy of Pakistani-heritage. At first she spoke in English but she suddenly became very animated and switched into Punjabi. She moved to the home corner and picked up a prayer mat and looked at it closely. She showed it to another girl of Pakistani-heritage and smiled. She got no response. She knelt down on it and put her head to the floor.

APPENDIX 4:

Ethnography of Special Activities and Festivals

Eid Preparations – November 2004

Environment

Some books about Eid had been introduced into the book area. There were also some models of a Muslim family. The children did not show any interest in these throughout the day.

Decorated wooden bricks had been introduced on a high table that represented a mosque. These were knocked down by the children at regular intervals and there was no point where any adult visited the area or where the children seemed to engage in any conversation about the mosque.

A display had been set up with an Eid Mubabarak sign, lights, a mendhi set, boy's and girl's salwar kameez, Eid cards, prayer mat, hats, beaded necklace, shoes, mendhi pattern pictures, gold, silver and red ornament, basket with red presents. As the children and parents came in none of them appeared to pay any attention to this.

Calendar Making

In the morning some of the children made Eid calendars with one of the white nursery nurses. They had already printed their hands on these and the idea was to decorate the hands with patterns. The mendhi patterns were not displayed nearby although this was the idea. About half of the children had decorated their hands in some form but the other half had put the glitter around the outside of the hands. None had done both. The calendars said 'Happy Eid' on them in both English and Urdu. The nursery nurse showed the children to read the Urdu from right to left and the English from left to right. Most of the children put the calendar tab on the wrong way round but this was corrected without an explanation. Three girls said that they have got new blue dresses for Eid. One said her mum had got a pink one. Another said her mum was making sweets and

pakorras. A boy said that he was not getting new clothes but he was getting a new red fire engine.

Two white boys came to make calendars. Both were told that they were going to make calendars but not told why and there was no mention of Eid. One boy asked why he was doing it but was told 'never mind why, just do it'. Later, his parents came and asked to see the head teacher. The nursery nurse was worried that this was because of making the Eid calendar and she asked me whether she said anything wrong.

A boy of Pakistani-heritage came to make a calendar. He said that they had prayers on the radio at his house and he told his mum and dad to go and pray. He was smiling and seemed to be very pleased with his calendar and he went to see one of the bilingual nursery nurses and told her what he had made.

Mitchell came to make an Eid card. He was told what he was making. I asked him whether he would be having Eid at his house. He said no he would be having Christmas but not just yet. I asked him why he would not be having Eid. He said 'because we're not dark are we? – We'll be having Christmas'. I asked him if he would like to have Eid. He said yes because he could get a Spiderman suit for his new clothes.

In the afternoon, one of the bilingual nursery nurses was making the calendars with the children. She put the calendar tab on for them and told them in English that she was going to paint their hands and then she switched to Punjabi where they did not understand. She told the children that the calendar was for Eid but did not talk about Eid with them. A girl of Pakistani-heritage made her calendar and came to show it to me and said 'it's for my Eid'. She then said 'Eid isn't my happy birthday, I had my happy birthday yesterday, I'm four

now.’ None of the children went to make their own cards independently as they did in the morning.

Story time: 2004-2005

The nursery nurse read a story about preparing for Eid. There was no bilingual support and the children struggled to understand what it was about. The illustrations were not typical of western notions of illustrations for children and appeared dull to me and the children showed little interest. They sat very quietly. The nursery nurse asked if they have Qu’rans at home but only one said yes. Two of the children said that their mums and dads only ate after the children had gone to bed because it was Ramadan.

The nursery nurse went and got items from the Eid display. All of the children knew what the mendhi box was. One girl got very animated when she saw the patterns – she spoke very little English. One of the boys said to put it on and let it dry and then wipe it off. Another boy, who often seemed to understand very little, suddenly became extremely animated and said his mum put it on her hands.

The nursery nurse went to get the clothes, hats and shoes. The children started to clap and laugh when she came back. They got very excited and started to speak rapidly to each other in Punjabi. Two of the children said ‘mendhi – mine mum’. They were asked what the different things were and they labelled them all in Punjabi.

They were taken to look at the Eid display. They got very excited and ran up and down the corridor. One of the boys started to unwrap the presents. The head teacher got annoyed and the nursery nurse blamed me – as ever – for getting them over-excited.

The afternoon children were not as interested in or excited by the Eid display. They spoke better English and most of them said that the

box was mendhi. One of the girls said to put the mendhi on and let it dry and then wash it off. The nursery nurse asked who put it on. The girl said her mum and then said 'you don't put it on – you're a white woman'.

The nursery nurse then showed them the rest of the resources and asked what they were – they labelled all of them in English but they were far less interested than the morning children had been.

Home Time

As one of the boys was leaving, the nursery nurse asked his mum if he had got a new salwar kameez for Eid. This mum said 'new clothes, yes'. The nursery nurse said 'are they blue, he says they are blue'. She said 'yes - Spiderman clothes'.

Nursery Christmas Preparations – December 2004 and 2005

Environment

In both 2004 and 2005, there was a Christmas tree in the entrance to the main nursery activity area. The decorations had been made in the nursery – cones that the children had then decorated with coloured shapes and glitter. Close by, there was a 'Happy Birthday Jesus' display with a nativity scene made up from the children's paintings on the wall and from models on the table. Garlands ran the length of the activity area width ways – one was made of multicoloured links, the others were green and gold.

Almost all of the display boards were covered with Christmas cards that the children had made. A stable had been set up in the role play area and there were dressing up clothes for the kings. This was little used during the morning. The longest play sequence was when three boys of Pakistani-heritage dressed up in costumes, left the role

play area and then said that they were playing Power Rangers. This happened in both the morning and the afternoon. There was also a magnet board with pictures of the nativity scene. This was played with by both white children and those of Pakistani-heritage. Those of Pakistani-heritage asked more questions of nearby staff about who the characters were.

In both 2004 and 2005, groups of white boys played in the home corner and put on crowns – these were too big and they laughed at each other. They said 'Power Rangers' and put their arms in the air. One of the children wanted to leave but was told 'no – stay in the house'. One of the boys of Pakistani-heritage tried to play with the white boys but they tried to stop him by standing in and blocking the way. Girls of Pakistani-heritage joined them from time to time and tried to get the crowns but they stopped them doing so and held the crowns where they couldn't reach them.

In both years, the children only had 45 minutes to play during the session (30 minutes of it outside with the climbing frame, driving sticks, the play house and the outdoor activity centre) and the rest of the time was snack (20 minutes) and Christmas concert practice (60 minutes). In the first 15 minutes, children who had been away were making Christmas cards. Two children asked why they were being put on the display boards – they were told it is so that the nursery looked nice.

In 2004 – 2005, Mitchell arrived for the afternoon session and said 'Look they've got a Christmas tree'. A white girl also stood and looked at the tree. A girl of Pakistani-heritage said 'Why is there a tree there?' No one answered. Later she went to ask SH who said 'well because it's Christmas nearly and some people have a tree at Christmas.' She asked 'is it Christmas today?' SH said there was a little while yet (2004-2005).

In 2004-2005, the Christmas cards consisted of: red cards with white snowmen on; blue cards with silver mesh stars and purple dots; red, blue and yellow cards with glitter stars; triangles in many different colours with circles and glitter on; blue and black cards with two circles, sand, glitter, red feathers and red sticks to make robins and blue cards with what appeared to be pink skin-coloured hand prints with faces on to make reindeer.

Also in 2004–2005, LP talked about the complexity of the relationships within her group where there were no white children and where the children spoke different languages and did not speak to each other – she explained this in terms of class differences within the Pakistani-heritage community. I was called away to deal with children who were throwing sand at each other. Fareeha was close by asking the children to clear up the play dough – she did this first in English and then in Punjabi but the children actually spoke to each other about it in English.

Eid Display: 2004

At the creative end of the nursery, there was a display of Eid Cards (made with circles, triangles, squares and glitter) with a sign in Urdu only saying Eid Mubarak. My initial thought in relation to the Eid Mubarak sign being in Urdu but not in English was that the staff believed that it was of relevance only to the Muslim children. I spoke to the bilingual nursery nurse who had created the display but she said that there was no particular reason for this: it was just that they already had the sign in Urdu from another year. She said that the children of Pakistani-heritage had Urdu only in their cards whilst the white children had English only.

Christmas Concert Rehearsal 2004

Some of the children joined in with the songs but the majority did not. Children such as Ziyad appeared to have no idea what was happening. Many of the children who had not understood well, responded by shouting and clapping when the Christmas tree was pulled up in the story and the children acting this out all fell over. In the nativity, the parts were played by both white children and those of Pakistani-heritage. They all appeared to know what role they were playing because they were sent to sit down according to role and they all responded appropriately.

The afternoon concert was little different from the morning, however, except that in the Christmas tree story, more of the children did seem to understand what was happening – whilst it was true that there were more white children present in the afternoon, a reasonable number of children of Pakistani-heritage also seemed to understand and to be enjoying themselves. It was also the case that almost half of one of register groups was absent.

Christmas Preparations 2005

Many of the children smiled at me as they came in and Brian came up and said 'do you want to put it there? – your hand'. I felt awkward and unsure whether to join in because he was demanding of attention and there were behaviour issues.

G.W. approached to ask me if I had seen Sadaf – she was crying again. I had not but she had seen me and was looking over anxiously. She spoke to one of the bilingual assistants and said she did not want me to come into story time. She watched me all the time and got distressed if I was anywhere near her. She was asked about why she did not like me but she just kept repeating that she did not want me to go into story time.

Only in the sand did white children and those of Pakistani-heritage play together. A lot of the children were now playing with other children and there were quite a few cases of boy-girl friendships amongst the white children and those of Pakistani-heritage. There are very few groupings with an ethnic mix – SH could think only of one grouping. I talked to G.W. about the lack of ethnic mix in activities and she talked about the increase in children of Pakistani-heritage attending church – they were Christian but still they did not mix with the white children who attended the church.

Christmas Concert 2005

In the second year of data collection, the concert was more 'low key' but the nativity remained in the form of a tableau. SH had intended children just to come on in costume whilst the songs were being sung but ES thought it would be better to tell the story. The children did not seem to know what was happening. Mary and Joseph were both white, a girl of Pakistani-heritage was a donkey, the shepherds were of Pakistani-heritage, three white girls were stars and the sheep were white. Almost all joined in with Twinkle Twinkle, almost none with Away in A Manger. Few of the children seemed to understand the parts or the actions needed. The other group of children did a performance of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Most children seemed to know what they were doing as they represented the different types of food. Most of the parts were taken by white children.

In the afternoon, the stars and Mary and Joseph were all of Pakistani-heritage and so was the donkey. A girl of Pakistani – heritage was Mary and looked very happy. The shepherds were played by one white girl, one white boy and boy of Pakistani-heritage. The sheep were played by a boy of Pakistani-heritage and two girls of Pakistani-heritage. The kings were played by two boys of Pakistani-heritage and one white boy.

Discussions with Staff: Christmas 2005

I asked the head teacher how they had decided on the scale of attention to pay to Eid and to Christmas bearing in mind that 85% of the children were of Pakistani-heritage. She said that they had done more for Eid than ever before but it was still relatively little in comparison to Christmas and a lot of parents had come into nursery for the party. Many of them had asked why they had not been asked to bring in party food and the bilingual nursery nurses had explained that the staff had been concerned to maintain the sugar – free policy of the nursery and did not think this would have been possible if parents had brought in food.

The head teacher also said that the staff had been discussing over the past three weeks what the meaning of Christmas was in a nursery such as theirs and they had been particularly concerned about whether they should be doing the nativity. An early years advisory teacher had recently asked them how relevant this was in relation to the religion and ethnicity of the children. The head teacher said they had also been concerned about the poor attendance at the concert over the past couple of years and wondered whether the nativity and the notion of it being a Christmas concert was the problem. On the other hand, two of the bilingual nursery nurses said that the parents were quite happy for Christmas to be celebrated. The head teacher did say, however, that the third bilingual nursery nurse was much more open about what the parents thought and she had also made them much more aware of some of the detail of religious practice. She said the biggest problem was really that most of the staff were practising Christians who attended church regularly. She also said that part of the problem was that although yearly planning catered for Christmas from the beginning because it was so much a part of the culture of school life, there was not the same familiarity with Eid and although it had been on the calendar

preparation had not gone on nearly as long as for Christmas. She suggested I should talk to the staff.

One of the bilingual nursery nurses felt that the children would have very little contact with Christmas at home but that the parents did not mind the activities at nursery – they expected schools to celebrate it. She felt that the parents had not attended the Christmas concerts recently only because they had been busy and the year before last it was also just about the same time as Eid and so they were occupied with Eid preparations.

Another bilingual nursery nurse talked about the way that 'Asian parents just can't be bothered' and this was why they did not come to the concert. She said she saw it as no different from them not wanting to come to the parent classes. She said it was particularly difficult because she had to talk to them about these during Ramadan and many said that she should have known better – they were far too busy. She said that she had told them 'yes but I've still been asked to ask you and you should think about it'. In relation to the nativity she said that she did not think it was a problem – Jesus was a prophet in Islam and so the story was real for them. The only objection would be if he was referred to as the son of God. She said she had refused to sing this in hymns herself at school because she did not believe it. She said that Christmas was a reality in an increasing number of Muslim homes because of the influence of TV, the shops and what the children experience in school. She went on that even though her family took their faith very seriously, her niece and nephew had asked for a Christmas tree at home and the family had decided to have one – this is an increasing trend. She also said that many of the children did now get Christmas presents too. She did not feel that the children had any real understanding about why they are making Christmas cards but all staff agreed that this was probably also true when they made Eid cards. She said that the reality was that many of the children would have been two when they

last experienced Christmas and Eid and so it was unlikely that they would have much background knowledge of either from last year.

The feeling from the teachers was that far too much time was spent on Christmas. One said she found it stressful and would rather be doing other things with the children. She felt that Eid was treated seriously now, however. The other teacher did not feel that they planned for Eid in anything like the same detail and certainly did not give it the same level of significance in the life of the nursery. A number of staff said that they worried about the stories they read about Father Christmas and receiving presents because this was not what would happen for a large number of the children. One of the nursery nurses looked annoyed by the discussion and talked about her sister's school where the children were of white British – heritage but where the children experienced a wide range of family situations. She questioned whether the fact that what was described in books was not what things were like for a significant number of children meant that these things should not be discussed at all –books talk about families being together at Christmas, for example, but this was not always the case even for white children. She also said that she felt that the experience of doing a concert seemed to lead to many of the children having a great deal more confidence after Christmas. The other nursery nurse was very quiet throughout but other staff later said that she was the major force behind the huge amount of time spent on Christmas.

Trip to the Seaside (2005, 2006 and 2007)

In May 2005, I was responsible for Mitchell during the trip to the seaside. It was a blustery and grey day but not raining. The children were all asked to put on nursery t-shirts and we carried bottles of water and hula hoops for them. There were 15 adults and 20 children. We walked to the station.

Mitchell began to talk on the train about his older brother who he said had died the previous week-end after falling downstairs. He went on to say 'but it's not God's fault. He got drunk and fell downstairs. That's why he died – it's not God's fault'.

We walked through the town to the beach and then to a hotel where the children and staff were to have lunch. All the children went to the toilet first and washed their hands. It was only 11.45 and we were alone in the dining room.

We then went to the beach and most of the time was spent running on the beach because it was quite chilly. Mitchell stayed with me at first but then attached himself to another member of staff. There were no apparent differences in how the children responded to the experiences.

We then walked back through the town to the railway station and caught the train back. Mitchell slept most of the way.

In May 2006, it was a very sunny, warm day with temperatures of over 20C. I was looking after *Adnan and Zahir*. There were 20 children and 12 adults. The children all wore identifying nursery t-shirts and the adults carried water and hula hoops. SH led and ST followed. SH had not slept because she had worried about the trip so much. We also had a bilingual assistant with us (who had never been on a train and was travel sick), a nursery nurse to support a child with SEN, whose mother also accompanied us, a trainee teacher and some other parents. We walked to the station and took the train to St Anne's. Adnan cuddled up to me, told me he loved me and then bit me in the stomach.

On arrival we are met by representative of the local authority who checked the safety of the trip arrangements. We walked through the town to the beach. SH led the children in running across the beach.

Adnan and Zahir became very uncertain as did a number of other children. Adnan and Zahir would not run at first – they looked at the sunbathers:

A – why they all dead?

Z – no they asleep

M – no!!! they are just getting a tan

Adnan and Zahir asked to hold my hand and we ran across the beach. They found it very difficult and did not seem to be used to the sand. Zahir said he was hungry and I told him we were going to the hotel to get something to eat but he appeared not to understand and kept saying he was hungry.

We then ran back and walked to the hotel just over the road where all of the children went to the toilet and we had lunch – cheese, egg and tuna sandwiches, crisps, orange, blackcurrant and pizza for the children plus some salad and tea and coffee for the staff. All had balloons tied to their chairs and after eating these were tied to the children's wrists.

We walked back to the beach and the children released the balloons into the air. Some protested, wanting to take them home but were told they couldn't all go on the train with balloons.

Zahir stayed on the edge of the beach for a long time, next to ST. A asked me to go to make sandcastles with him. He had clearly done this before and tipped the bucket upside down with his foot. Zahir then began to play with a ball and was joined by Mitchell and they fought over the ball for the rest of the time on the beach.

We walked back to the train. The children were asked to take their shoes off to get the sand out. Adnan just sat and waited for it to be done for him but was made to do it himself though he needed a lot of

help. On the way back Adnan slept whilst Zahir talked to the young man in front of him and tapped him on the shoulder – he was clearly uncomfortable with this.

We walked back to the nursery after getting off the train and the children went home.

Towards the end of the writing up period, in May 2007, I returned to the nursery to discuss the findings and to consider the implications. At this time, I also accompanied the children on the annual trip to St Anne's. I looked after Hamad who asked me to play cricket with him on the beach:

H.: You be England and I'll be Pakistan.

I know nothing about cricket and was a little unsure what would happen next. H. rubbed the ball on his trousers and did the kind of run up and over arm bowling that I remembered from less than enjoyable games lessons at school. I tried to hit the ball and succeeded.

I.: I'll be Pakistan now and you can be England

H. No, I Pakistan. You be England. I live in England but my country is Pakistan. I Pakistan guy.

APPENDIX 5:

Ethnography of Spring and Summer Term Visits in 2006

Early January

On returning to the nursery, the role play area was set up with a trolley with plastic pineapples, grapefruit, apples, potatoes, cauliflowers, courgettes, carrots, peppers, cabbage, corn on the cob, onions, potatoes, scales, an open & closed sign and a till.

In the home corner, in addition to the usual, there was a set of note sheets, a ski brochure and strips to make shopping lists. In the bed there were one black and three white dolls (all seemed to be girls).

The writing area had Asda, Morrisons, McDonalds logos and Ritz, milk, KitKat, spaghetti hoops, Rice Krispie, Fa and Oxo labels.

The display boards had been given purple and lilac backings to match the new decoration and there were mounts of paint mixing, shape printing patterns (white on black), snowmen and writing own names (free attempts)

Most morning children came in readily and went straight to activities and to other children. One boy and one girl of Pakistani-heritage hovered at the entrance to the area. Sairah came and stood next to me and smiled. Michelle was wearing a pink outfit that said 'if you think I'm cute you should see my mummy'

In terms of activity choice, four boys and one girl of Pakistani-heritage and one white boy went to the sand; four boys and one girl of Pakistani-heritage went to the home corner; two white girls and one boy of Pakistani-heritage went to the writing area. Two girls of Pakistani-heritage played with Sharikah with the Toolo. Two girls of Pakistani-heritage, one white girl, two white boys, one boy of Pakistani-heritage went to the maths area. No children go to Creative Area despite three staff being in there. One white boy and two girls of Pakistani-heritage worked at separate PCs. Three white

girls sat on top of the large construction bricks pretending to drive cars. Two boys of Pakistani-heritage fed chips to the baby. One said to the other 'Don't do that again – naughty – him he being naughty'. They switched to speaking Punjabi once they were aware of my presence.

I was squatting observing but Adnan came to look and appeared to be looking for the chair. He went away and returned with a chair that he attempted to slip under me.

Sairah followed me around for much of the morning and stood next to me and smiled and nodded. She went into the home corner when I suggested it and stood at cooker turning the knobs. Neila also followed me around and played Peepo

In the shop, the children found the roles of customer and shop keeper difficult to separate. Only Alan really understood what the scales were and about making them balance 'I could be a good shop keeper couldn't I?' The children said very little to each other when the staff were present but sometimes repeated the language that was being modelled for them. When the staff left they became much more animated, using some of the modelled language but also arguing about who should be the shop keeper. ST returned

ST I know it's a British thing but it would be much easier if
 you would stand in a line

They did and an ever – lengthening queue developed.

ST Say thank you
 Say bye bye'
 No – ask him what he wants

Javeria Thank you, bye, bye

Once the children had bought fruit and vegetables and put them in a paper bag, some took them to the home corner but others got back in the queue.

Jamie I want some potatoes'

ST How many would you like?'

Jamie (Shows 5 fingers and pretends to give money)

Kelvin There's nothing there'

Norma What would you like to buy?'

Annette Apples'

Norma Say how many

Annette Two

Norma What do you want?

Jack Pineapple

Norma how many?

Jack two and a zero

SH I think he's telling you how much they cost

Jamie Can I have some milk'

Josh Milk? – I haven't got no milk (checking trolley drawers)

Jamie I'd like that putting in a bag'

Josh I'll give you a bag in a minute – I have all these
(pointing under counter)

Jamie They haven't got milk and they haven't got DVDs at that
shop

Kelvin Say how much is it

(Myra comes in)

Kelvin Excuse me – what would you like to buy?

Melanie I'd like some carrots and toast – I don't need to buy all
them things

Kelvin You want toast? – there's no toast here!

Adnaan (Goes behind counter and helps himself)

Josh Give ME that bag – you've got to buy it!

SH left the area and Calvin, Jake and Jack roared like lions at the other children.

At Story Time one day, the story was *Rosie's Walk* and Jacob remembered most of it and Neila and Jack remembered some bits.

Jacob he stood on that thing and it whacked him ont nose

Adnan Fox want eating

Jacob Whack him ont nose

Jack The fox is gonna be dead in a minute

Adnan He going ducks

Jacob The frogs say 'attack'

Neila No frogs go 'rebit, rebit'

Ariba It's going to bite her

Eliza The hen's mouth has a bag under it!

Jacob It's not a bag it's like a beard!

Aisha Eating

Izma He's going to do this

Tibah (Just points at picture when asked what will happen next and keeps looking at me)

Jacob It will pull her up theyr (up in the sky)

Only Eliza could explain what happened with the barrow and knew 'hives'

Adnan He's going to eat her – he's banged him with his head –
bang, bang

Eliza I think they're going to sting him

Jacob Looks like they've made a snake'
 She might lay an egg for her tea'

Aisha My house got smiley face stickers'

Jacob I've got 5 hula hoops and 1 free

SH asked Tibah several times to give out fruit – she didn't seem to hear

One afternoon, Ibrahim arrived in a white salwar kameez and waistcoat in black, red and gold. He clung to his cousin and stood next to her yawning as she played in the shop. Later he played in the sand and was very animated as he piled up large mounds of sand.

Brian came up to me and said 'I'm going to watch you drawing – you don't know how to draw my name do you not?'

In the shop Mitchell says I want to be it now (the shopkeeper)

ST You need to wait for your turn

(Ignores her and goes behind the counter)

Brian What do you want – sorry I'm shut

ST No we're open all day and very late
because there are a lot of customers'

The children were saying which bag they wanted rather than what they wanted in it

Brian We sell pears – do you want one?

Suddenly I saw Sadaf across the room and she was crying. Fareeha was trying to calm her down and telling her that I wouldn't be coming into story and that I'm nice

Three girls and two boys of Pakistani–heritage and one boy of white – indigenous heritage came into the shop but all just stood by in silence as Brian gave them fruit and vegetables and asked for their money.

Zara became the shop keeper.

Brian came over to me and asked 'do you want me to do some drawing as well?'

Lut and Zain played together in the shop. Zain spoke Punjabi to Lut – he looked much happier now but he did not answer.

Three girls and one boy of Pakistani–heritage stood having drinks of water and chatting to each other in Punjabi.

Sa'dan and Haseen played together in the home corner. Haseen asked him 'will you get me some water?'. No response- 'oh – I'll get some water'. Sadaf joined them and said she went to Morrisons

shopping with daddy and mummy. Sa'dan, Haseen and Zain spoke Punjabi to each other and then Haseen spoke English to Sa'dan. Zain spoke Punjabi to Jack who tried to copy what he had said.

(Blond) Jack approached Sa'dan and Haseen and said: 'You two have you seen that white Brian?' – later I discuss this with SH who thinks he means 'blond'.

Later January

The nursery was set up much as before on my return but a black tray had been set up with house furniture and play people. Some of them were white and some were of minority ethnic origin – but the origin was difficult to distinguish. A white girl and a girl of Pakistani–heritage played there first and both chose white dolls. All of the dolls were female. Another white girl joined and two white boys. They all played separately from each other in silence except for Melanie who spoke in a very high pitched voice but not using proper words. I asked if she was speaking English because I could not tell what she was saying but she said 'course I am silly – mummy's talking to the baby'.

A farm was set up close by and dogs and horse were brought into the house. The boys started to laugh when the dog took the baby for a walk in a pram. One of boys said the family were going on holiday and picked up a suitcase.

'They're going on an aeroplane on holiday now to Scarborough. It will take 58 hours.'

A boy of Pakistani–heritage picked up a white female doll and asked 'who wants the hot porridge?' Once he saw me, he headed off elsewhere

Minority ethnic dolls had also been introduced into the home corner. All except one black African doll were being carried about by girls. Two girls of Pakistani-heritage were carrying about all the baby dolls and baby play people. The staff commented that it was difficult to be sure of the ethnicity of the dolls and that they had discovered that they didn't have many.

In the Creative Area, Zain, Sufayaan and Farwa were painting and printing. There was no interaction between them. Sufayaan kept turning around and smiling at me. Aisha came along but just stood and watched. Bilingual and non-bilingual staff asked her what she wanted to do but they got no response though she did look at them.

Two girls of Pakistani-heritage played alongside each other in the home corner but did not talk to each other.

Outside, one boy and one girl of Pakistani-heritage wandered around outside on the fringes not choosing anything to play with

In the afternoon, as the children arrived, I was setting up a bedroom and kitchen with small world play equipment and was joined by three boys of Pakistani-heritage who put all the babies to bed and then drove bikes through the rest of the house furniture. They appeared to watch for my reaction but did not speak to each other.

The home corner remained empty for the first part of the afternoon session. When I moved nearby, two boys of Pakistani-heritage sat on the seats with the dolls. They then got shopping bags out of the cupboard and said they were going shopping. One of the boys gave me a satsuma and said 'all eat'. One of the children pretended to pour soup over my head and started to write on my notepad.

In the home corner, Sadaf was pretending to give fruit to two girls of Pakistani-heritage who were sitting on sofas with babies. Sadaf then took a baby herself and started to undress it. She kept smiling at me

and then brought me the doll to help dress it. Sadaf kept bringing me things and smiling at me. Then she went to two girls with dolls and spoke Punjabi to them and they did to each other. They spoke in Punjabi in an animated fashion but look embarrassed when they thought I was watching. There was then a dispute over the dolls and they switched to English.

The black tray was filled with soap suds and sponges and was very popular with girls of Pakistani-heritage many of whom had the least proficiency in English. They generally played silently but giggled when they got soap suds on their faces.

Sadaf, a small group of boys of Pakistani-heritage and Laurence all followed me around. Laurence went to the interactive whiteboard but didn't like the programme and so went to the laptop and got the disk out and replaced it with another one. He loaded up the new disk but is told off by ST.

At story time, the story was 'Handa's Surprise' and Haseen remembered it. The less confident children were encouraged to join in but did not do so even when it was translated into Punjabi. SH later said that bilingual stories did not engage them because they had to wait too long for the translations – the best were stories in Punjabi – the children were very different then. Ibrahim was upset when he arrived and sat yawning throughout. He was not asked to contribute. He looked regularly at the bilingual student and also looked at me and then back to her. Laurence was following the story but found it very difficult to sit still.

As they came out of story time, a boy of Pakistani-heritage said 'friend, friend' to me.

March

Since my last visit to the nursery some building work had been carried out outside to provide accommodation for younger children and some internal work had also been completed, with most of the doors being replaced. Part of the corridor leading up to the bathroom had been closed off with walls and a door to make a small group room. New cupboards and units had been installed in the creative and kitchen areas.

The display boards had been changed and had paintings of daffodils in green and yellow. There were also some printed daffodils and there were vases of daffodils and tulips in the writing area. There were some drawings of daffodils and tulips. A black tray had been set up with compost and plastic flowers.

The home corner contained some new dressing up clothes reflecting the Indian subcontinent. There were two black dolls and one white. One doll was in non-Western dress.

The outdoor area had been set up with drawing, bats and balls, steering wheels, stilts, buckets and brushes, plant pots, trowels, wheel barrows, bubble blowers, climbing frame, pulley system with fir cones. The safety surface had been removed because it was disintegrating and so the climbing frame was out of use and turned on its side.

A puppet area had been set up with goldilocks, bears and a wolf. In the morning, one boy and one girl of Pakistani-heritage and a white boy went to the puppet area. The girl of Pakistani-heritage made the Goldilocks puppet dance. Michelle came up to show me the wolf puppet and then swapped it for a pop up one. Two white boys came up to me and wanted me to go to play with them. Gee came in, says hello and goes to get the wolf puppet and then the pop up one. Gee brought the wolf over and bit me on the nose. She then brought a bear and stroked my face.

A boy of Pakistani–heritage kept bringing me toys and puppets to look at me and smiling and later he spoke to me in Punjabi.

In the afternoon, Laurence came in and picked up a wolf puppet and SH asked him what he has done this morning.

Laurence I've been a good boy.

He then came over and the wolf bit me hard on the nose. We talked about this and then the puppets stroked my nose instead.

Two boys and two girls of Pakistani–heritage and one boy of white indigenous heritage picked up the puppets and they fought with each other and then fought over the puppets.

Three white boys played alongside each other and talked to each other in the construction area. One of the white boys kept asking a boy of Pakistani–heritage to come to his factory but got no response. They were joined by two boys of Pakistani–heritage who initially did not speak to each other or to anybody else but who then started to talk in Punjabi to the first boy of Pakistani–heritage but not to the white boy who kept asking them to come to his factory.

A girl of Pakistani–heritage appeared and said 'Hello Jack'.

(She was ignored.)

'Hello Jack'.

(She was ignored again)

'I said hello Jack'

Boy of white-indigenous heritage: 'I'm not Jack'

Girl of Pakistani-heritage: 'Well who are you then?'

Boy of white-indigenous heritage: 'I'm Luke'

'Well Luke – there's a train coming - it's raining, it's pouring, the old man is boring.

Then she went up to Luke and roared.

Luke asked her to tie his shoe lace but she said 'I can't'

Two girls of Pakistani-heritage came up to me and stood next to me and gazed at me.

'It's a dress up party at our caravan'

'He's ready for the dress up party and then they're going to dance

'It's a rudey dress up party where you get your clothes off'

Both boys and girls of Pakistani-heritage kept coming and standing next to me and smiling

In the home corner, a boy of Pakistani-heritage (Ibrahim) spoke animatedly on two telephones at the same time. He sounded as though he was speaking Punjabi but L.P. said he had a speech and language delay and didn't speak Punjabi at home. This raised questions about why his 'mock conversation' sounded like Punjabi

Two boys of Pakistani-heritage and one white boy drove cars and lorries around the road map. They didn't talk to each other. The

white boy was aware of my presence and became boisterous.
Another boy of Pakistani–heritage joined them

‘I’m going to Morrison’s and you’re not’

‘No I’m going home’

‘Come on and park’.

They made car noises and were joined by Jack. The boys of Pakistani–heritage talked to each other and then to Jack. He said ‘I’m crashing’. A boy of Pakistani–heritage and a white boy drove off together down the corridor.

Three girls of Pakistani–heritage were playing together in the home corner bedroom – they had dolls and dressing up clothes. Two had to show the dressing up clothes to Ariba who did not move from sofa and decided they were dirty and needed to be watched. They became aware that I was listening with one of the bilingual assistants and changed to English: ‘This is our bedroom’. The conversation stopped. They moved to the living room and Ariba still sat on the sofa and switched back to Punjabi and the bilingual assistant said she was telling the other girls that the babies were dribbling and needed to be cleaned up. Ariba was now on the phone and switched back to English because she was aware I was listening ‘My friends are laughing’. They sang together in Punjabi and laughed.

April

Very little had changed since my last visit. In the morning, a white girl and a girl of Pakistani–heritage came in together and went to look around to see what there was to do.

At story time Amila gave the snack out first to the children of Pakistani–heritage. The book was in English and Urdu but the bilingual assistant read it only in English. Simah was very animated (she had rarely spoken) and she responded to every page. Michelle dominated the story time and Simah struggled to be listened to but she persisted.

The children then gathered together for a visit from the Easter Bunny. They all became very animated when he appeared at the window and all responded to him knocking at the window. Simah continued to be very animated afterwards and went to tell all members of staff what had happened. The staff were all very surprised and told ST about it. Simah then did some colour mixing and was very animated in her responses to the other children. April went to show her plate puppet to Ziyad who was in her story group.

Two boys of Pakistani–heritage had made box models and said they wanted to paint them white. They appeared confused about the difference between glue and paint because then said they wanted to stick foil on to the paint. They were brought some glue to use and spread it on like paint.

Two or three boys of Pakistani–heritage did not settle to an activity and watched from the margins. One boy at the water trays smiled across at me constantly.

At story time, Shahdiya swapped between Punjabi and English as necessary and this led to those children who were not confident in

English making some attempt. The children who were usually quiet and hesitant did speak when asked in Punjabi. Quite often words were said or questions asked in Punjabi whilst the children replied in English.

A little later, the children were told they would be having a holiday soon and a few of the children knew that it would be the Easter Holiday. This time Shahdiya translated into Punjabi all the time – though once again a lot of the children replied in English. Some knew about Easter eggs. SH explained that they wouldn't have eggs at nursery and asked why. Some children knew that they don't have chocolate and sweets at nursery because of sugar. They also talked about needing to clean their teeth if they had sweets or chocolate at home after meals. The Easter Bunny knocked on the windows and SH talked about what he had brought. The Easter Bunny knocked on one window and then the other. The children became increasingly animated. Lut showed little expression but did wave when the Easter Bunny said goodbye.

June

There had been no changes to the lay out or the displays since the last visit but the head teacher was on sick leave and LP was acting head.

LP showed me a picture and head line from the regional evening paper that said 'children don fancy dress for party at nursery'. The children were not in fancy dress. The secretary commented that it was strange because the reporter was of Pakistani-heritage.

Adnan arrived and came up to me and said 'are we going on a trip?' . I replied 'No we've been on the trip' and so he asked 'What are you doing here then?' and then went off to play.

Since this was my last visit to the nursery, I was interested to see whether there are been any changes to who the children chose to play with and so spent some time noting their choices:

Five boys of Pakistani-heritage and two white boys were playing on the banking outside. Mitchell came to ask me to play with him in the shop. I told him I would later.

One girl of Pakistani-heritage, one boy of Pakistani-heritage, one white boy and one white girl were playing alongside each other with a bilingual assistant with the small construction equipment.

A white girl and white boy were playing together with a trolley and basket full of food from shop.

Three boys of Pakistani-heritage were playing with a football.

Three girls of Pakistani-heritage and one boy of Pakistani-heritage were in the shop.

Six boys of Pakistani-heritage were playing with pulley system.

Three white girls were playing together on a rocking horse.

A white boy played alone with a football and kept looking over towards me but he didn't not speak to me, though he kept moving closer.

Later Melanie asked me to play with her in the home corner.

She said 'you get yourself something to eat and I'll put the babies to bed'

I said 'Should I cook you some thing?'

She said 'No I'll get something later'

I sat writing and she came back from the bedroom and said 'but you are cooking – I'll make you some orange wooden pie'

A white boy and a boy of Pakistani–heritage came to sit next to me – they made toast and passed it to me.

A girl and boy of Pakistani–heritage worked together at the computer.

Three white boys, one white girl played together with SH and then with another white member of staff in the shop.

Amila, Tanzeela and Mitchell played football together – they were all in the same group. Amila was very pleased with herself when she managed to kick the ball.

Three boys and one girl of Pakistani–heritage played with water and stones and brushes with Fareeha.

At Story Time Melanie told the children to say thank you as she gave out the snack. The bilingual assistant said that she should have offered me some but Melanie said 'Mr Barron is just a big one – he doesn't have snack no more'. Tanzeela and Amila talked to each other and disrupted the story.

In the afternoon, the children appeared to come in happily. Two girls of Pakistani–heritage were wearing traditional rich ornate dresses and one boy was wearing a salwar kameez. All the rest were dressed in western clothes.

Three white boys and two girls of Pakistani–heritage went to do string paintings. Two girls and one boy of Pakistani–heritage went to the home corner.

A boy of Pakistani–heritage went to the construction area and kept looking across at me and smiling

‘I know you – I seen you before didn’t I?’

Sadaf arrived and looked over at me nervously. She smiled and went to the creative area and smiled back at me anxiously. Later she came over to show me the doll she was playing with and seemed more secure.

Three boys of Pakistani–heritage played boisterously and aggressively with the bricks and they kick fought and jumped off them. A bilingual assistant told the most aggressive boy to stop. She was his sister and he postured towards her and stuck his chin in her face. They kept coming over and showing me the cars that they said their brothers had.